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THE  
VOLUNTARY SYSTEM:

A PRIZE ESSAY,  
IN REPLY TO THE LECTURES OF DR. CHALMERS  
ON CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS.

BY  
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## P R E F A C E.

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EARLY in the summer of 1838, THE PROTESTANT SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY were induced to offer a prize of one hundred guineas to the best essay, and a second prize of twenty-five guineas to the second-best, in answer to the Lectures of Dr. Chalmers on Church Establishments, and in defence of the Voluntary System.

By the unanimous decision of the examiners,—the Rev. Thomas Raffles, D.D., LL.D., the Rev. J. Pye Smith, D.D., LL.D., F.G.S., and William Tooke, Esq., F.R.S.,—the first prize was adjudged to the following Treatise.

In complying with the terms on which the prize was proposed, the author submits this Essay to the public, with some regret; partly because he could

have wished that principles so important as those on which voluntaryism rests had found an abler advocate, and partly because his advocacy of them may divide him from friends he has long known, revered, or loved.

The *first* cause of regret, however, is to a great degree obviated by the unanimous opinion of the adjudicators: he respects and bows to their decision.


To the *second* he is unwilling to attach much importance, when once it has been decided that his labours may promote the interests of truth. In seeking to diffuse the wisdom which is "*first* pure, *then* peaceable," he trusts that he shall ever be prepared to sacrifice his own personal feelings to the claims of Christian duty.

With the faults of this publication no one can be more intimately acquainted than the author himself. In apology it may be stated, that the greater portion of it was written in seasons when he sought relief from the fatigues of the urgent and arduous duties of a London pastor,—duties that allow but little time auspicious for literary occupations.

If any object to the brevity and conciseness of a work that professes to settle so intricate a question, and one that involves interests so momentous, in the

space of two hundred pages, he can only answer in the language of our own Milton,—“ Having herein the scripture so copious and so plain, we have all that can properly be called true strength and nerve ; the rest would be but pomp and incumbrance. . . . The brevity I use, not exceeding a small manual, will not, therefore, I suppose, be thought the less considerable, unless with them, perhaps, who think that great books only can determine great matters. I rather choose the common rule, not to make much ado where less may serve ; which in controversies, and those especially of religion, would make them less tedious, and by consequence read oftener by many more, and with more benefit.”

But whatever be the imperfections of this Publication, he asks for it a candid and prayerful perusal ; under the conviction, that till the principles advocated be practically acknowledged both by the Church and by the State, the interests of both will continue to suffer ; the minds of men will still be more alienated from the Commonwealth, whilst the Church will remain, as now, lamentably feeble, secular, and divided.



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## CHAPTER I.

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### OF CERTAIN SOPHISTICAL STATEMENTS OF THE VOLUNTARY QUESTION.

“ C'est qu'en effet, en travaillant à la destruction du pouvoir absolu dans l'ordre spirituel, la révolution religieuse du seizième siècle n'a pas connu les vrais principes de la liberté intellectuelle : elle affranchissait l'esprit humain, et prétendait encore à le gouverner par la loi. . . . Aussi est-elle tombée dans une double faute : d'une part elle n'a pas connu ni respecté tous les droits de la pensée humaine ; au moment où elle les réclamait pour son propre compte elle les violait ailleurs ; d'autre part, elle n'a pas su mesurer, dans l'ordre intellectuel, les droits de l'autorité ; je ne dis pas de l'autorité coactive, qui n'en saurait posséder aucun en pareille matière, mais de l'autorité purement morale, agissant sur les esprits seuls et par la seule voie de l'influence. . . . On n'a pas su concilier les droits et les besoins de la tradition avec ceux de la liberté ; et la cause en a été sans aucun doute dans cette circonstance, que la Réforme n'a pleinement compris et accepté ni ses principes ni ses effets.”—  
GUIZOT, *Histoire de la Civilization en Europe*, XIIème Leçon.

1. THERE is probably no one at all conversant with the history of knowledge but has been deeply affected by the general prevalence of error and the slow advancement of truth. Ages have often been needed for the diffusion of elementary principles, and ages more for the correction of the very errors which these principles implicitly condemned.

In questions of Christian doctrine and practice this prevalence of error can scarcely be a matter of surprise; for, in the *first* place, the time devoted to the removal of it has been extremely limited. Out of the eighteen centuries that have passed away since the death of the Founder of the Christian scheme, not more than *two* can be set apart as fertile in investigation and favourable to its success. "There are deserts and wastes in times, as in countries." The schoolmen, whose minds were hemmed in on almost every side by the restrictions of ecclesiastical authority, and whose creed allowed them to read the scriptures only on the condition that they found there no other doctrines than those itself approved, were mainly occupied in the metaphysics of theology; and even the fruits which the cultivation of such a territory yielded were kept altogether from the mass of the people: "No man gave unto *them*." Their only nourishment was the natural product of prejudice and ignorance, fostered by the passions of a superstition scarcely less deadly than that of pagan Rome.\*

A *second* cause may be found in the little time which, even during these two centuries, was given to the investigation of practical truth, and in the unhappy circumstances in which it has been investigated.

\* These remarks apply, it will be remembered, to the Romanism of the *middle ages*.

The first of them was wasted in preliminary discussion. It was not then determined whether men might be allowed to read and judge for themselves. Even since the time of Chillingworth and Locke, by whom it had generally been thought, till lately, this question was for ever set at rest, truth has been hidden from observation,—partly by the mists of tradition, which have concealed much of the outline of her form;—partly by what Bacon calls the whirl and confusion of argument, which have distorted her features; and—partly by the haze with which unholy passions have enveloped the intellectual eye of observers, and which is directly opposed to the “dry light” so essential to the right exercise of its functions. Reverence for antiquity, “in matters where we are more ancient than they that were before us,”—the power of theological terms (those ghosts of past controversies) in reacting upon the mind—prejudice and passion in every form—all seem to have combined their influence for the purpose of retarding the advancement of truth. For ages they have kept the intellect of man spell-bound within their magic circle; so that either its state has been one of utter inaction, or its activity has been mere *movement* without *progress*.

In most minds, the failures of the past will be regarded with thankfulness and hope: they are, in truth, the encouragement of our own times. It is

now known that the slow progress of truth is owing neither to any feebleness of its own, nor to any indifference on the part of its author, but solely to ourselves; and that therefore if only investigation be pushed on by the right men, and in the right spirit, there is every prospect of its becoming in the end universally successful. From the very reverses of the past, connected as they are with human weakness, as the cause of them, the inquirer may anticipate future victory. At no distant period he may hope to have the hemispheres of error and truth as accurately mapped and as minutely described as is now the geography of the material world. “Si in viâ ipsâ scientias inveniendi et colendi erratum sit, atque hominum opera in iis consumpta in quibus minimè oportebat: sequitur ex eo, non in rebus ipsis difficultatem oriri, quæ potestatis nostræ non sunt, sed in intellectu humano ejusque usu et applicatione: *quot igitur fuerint errorum impedimenta in præterito, tot sunt spei argumenta in futurum.*”\*

These observations, which might be employed with great justice for the settlement of the whole question of tradition, it is now intended to confine to the questions of voluntaryism and dissent. The advocates of church establishments—the compulsories—have for some time past taunted dissenters with the novelty

\* Nov. Org.



of the position they at present occupy in this country. They remind them again and again that Philip Henry, and Calamy, and Baxter, and Owen, were opposed to their favourite principle; that these good men were not "voluntaries," but "nonconformists;" that they thought highly of the advantages of an ecclesiastical establishment; and that for years their talents and piety were among its brightest ornaments.

All this may be allowed: the early reformers were almost to a man advocates of a state church; toleration itself was condemned when it meant anything more than toleration of themselves.\* The voluntary *principle* may be confessed to be the offspring of our own age. But then it ought to be remembered, that most of the splendid generalizations of science are open to the same objections; that "truth is the daughter of *time*, not of authority;" and that therefore our opinions should no more be confined to the opinions of our fathers, *because theirs*, than the decisions of a matured experience to the fancies of childhood, or the boundaries of the globe, either physical or intellectual, to the narrow discoveries of antiquity. If the opinions of Baxter be just, let them be proved. Dissenters may be convinced by argument, when they dare not be silenced by authority; truths which they allow not for *his sake*, may be allowed for *their own*.

\* See note A.

But if, on the other hand, they be founded in error, it is their praise, not their reproach, that they have ventured to reject them.

The truth is, that in all principles and practices which are confessedly "not from the beginning," the opinions of the men of that day are to be received with great caution. The "gross darkness" that had been thickening in for centuries was still resting upon a large portion of the globe of truth. Over the more prominent doctrines of ethics and theology the light of the gospel had indeed shined, and they have been examined with all the zeal and attention that are inspired by novelty and conscious freedom; but questions not absolutely vital, spots less favoured, were as yet unvisited, though, for system's sake, they were often minutely, but inaccurately, described. We are older than our fathers; and if wisdom be the fruit of experience, and experience of time, we must first learn why we are to discredit the conclusions of our own age before we can be persuaded to act upon the contrary conclusions of the past.\*

This principle of admitting whatever our fathers believed *on* sufficient proof, and of rejecting whatever they believed *without* it, may be held in perfect con-

\* This "idol of the den," as Bacon would have phrased it, among other less illustrious worshippers, has received the homage of Coleridge and Chalmers.

sistency with a deep veneration for their character and acquirements. It is possible enough to allow that they were great men, and yet hold that they were men only. Voluntaries permit them to solicit their judgment, though they refuse them the right to claim their belief. Their statements of what they deemed truth they use as the chief of a voyage of discovery might use the charts of preceding navigators. They allow them to guide and help their investigations, and are only unwilling that they should supersede them. They desire to give to the fathers of the Reformation the same honour that the disciples of science give to the fathers of modern physics; and they hold them to be no prudent friends either of these illustrious men or of religion who would give more. Baxter, and Henry, and Owen, they revere; and so far as their opinions are supported by scripture they desire to receive them; but homage and unbounded submission they must reserve for a far higher authority. He that commanded the payment "unto Cæsar of the things that are Cæsar's," commanded too the payment "*unto God* of the things that are God's."

Nor is it difficult to explain the error of these great men on facts with which both scripture and common experience are familiar. Not only was the Reformation incomplete, but it was almost impossible for the

men of that age to complete it. They contemplated neither its principles nor its results. They knew not all they were doing, nor why they did it; and besides, deeply indebted as they were to the old system, they were not prepared for its subversion. They who *first* “find the treasure” generally purchase “the field” that contains it; while they who are the “merchant-men” of truth, who are trained as well as devoted to the business of seeking it, purchase the treasure alone. Baxter was indebted to the established church for his learning, his piety, his protestantism; so that in his anxiety that others might share in the blessings, it cannot excite surprise that he should advise them to “buy the field” in which he himself had found them.\*

2. While some have been thus occupied in proving that the voluntaries ought not to be associated with the great men of puritanical times, others have been scarcely less active in connecting them with another class of religionists, who condemn all human exertion, and would leave the conversion of the world to the supernatural agency of the Spirit. This class profess to be uncertain—whether, since the evil is so enor-

\* See the Remains of Alexander Knox, London, 1836, for a beautiful explanation of the parables of the 13th of Matthew. His remarks on the situation and prospects of the established church deserve an attentive perusal.

mous, they are called upon to fret and exhaust themselves in a petty warfare against it;—whether they ought to attempt the destruction of what God has allowed;—whether there is not some danger of our “tormenting” the legions of darkness “before the time;”—whether it is not folly or pride, under the semblance of piety, in creatures like ourselves speaking of our insignificant efforts as acts of co-operation with the energy of an Almighty power; and—whether, in matters of this kind, the attitude which best becomes the littleness of man is not one of silent, moveless admiration. “Be still,” is their favourite text, “and know that I am God.”

The piety of these Christians, their profound sense of human weakness, we honour and love; but in this one point, the great body of dissenters have no sympathy with them. God can carry on his own work, they know; but they feel persuaded, both from scripture and experience, that it will be a most alarming expression of his displeasure if ever that work be carried on without the co-operation of the church.

The question of establishments is not, whether instrumentality be needed—on that point all are agreed,—but, what instrumentality is most likely to be followed with success.

3. Still less does the difference between the ad-

vocates of establishments and ourselves involve any doubts of the truth of the Bible, or any questioning of the power of "faith and love," those essential elements of the Christian character\* in promoting the improvement and the happiness of its genuine disciples. The influence of the truth, and the influence of that Spirit who has promised that it shall not continue unprospered, are our main hope. The corrupt tendencies of the hearts of men are all but omnipotent; and, strengthened as they are by the "solemn plausibilities of custom"—by the venerableness of antiquity—by the pride and perverseness of our nature—and by the mighty "hosts" that are leagued with them, our only solace is, "that the same Jesus who was crucified is now exalted to give repentance unto Israel;" and that the reward of his sufferings, and the prevalence of his intercession, and the faithfulness of the Divine promise, all are identified with the ultimate triumphs of truth. Something may be expected from legislative improvements,—something more from the diffusion of knowledge,—but our first and chief dependence is on the attraction and practical influence of the cross.

Let it be remembered, then, that voluntaries are not necessarily infidels. A denial of the divinity of

\* "This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another."—1 John, iii. 23.



establishments by no means involves a denial of the divinity of the gospel.

4. The question of voluntaryism must further be distinguished from that of forms and creeds. With neither the one nor the other has it any necessary connexion. We ourselves happen to be *nonconformists*: some of the practices of the church we think, in origin, superstitious and fanciful; in themselves, childish and impertinent; and, as tests of Christian communion, eminently unchristian. We happen, too, to be *dissenters*: some of the articles of the church, in the common interpretation of them, we cannot approve; we believe them to be unscriptural, and eminently injurious to the interests of the truth. But it is not on forms or faith that our voluntaryism is founded. If to-morrow the favoured sect of to-day were repudiated, and state endowments given to our own, we should still protest against them. Our non-conformity and our dissent might cease, but as voluntaries we should continue to denounce so unhallowed an union. To whatever form or whatever creed the state-prerogatives are given, voluntaries hold them to be alike unchristian and unjust.\*

\* It has been suggested, whether a revision of the articles of the church might not remove the objections of voluntaries: an ill-judged suggestion. It is not so much the articles of the sect as the national endowment of the sect which they condemn.

5. Nor is this question one of economy or finance. If it were, the advocates of voluntarism would certainly side with their opponents. They, too, can profess no sympathy with that parsimonious spirit that would leave the preachers of the gospel without any adequate return for the expenses of their education, oftentimes without the means of providing for their families. If it be right that the state should support the clergy, let them be supported, not starved on a pittance which the public minister would be ashamed to offer to the lowest clerk of a public office. To depreciate intellectual labour, or the worth of intellectual men, is doubtless a sure sign of a degenerate age; but in that depreciation, in this instance at least, dissenters have no share. They object neither to the amount nor to the number of state endowments, but to the principle of them. They would have the clergy paid, and paid well; only not by the forced contributions of an ignorant and discontented peasantry, who know just enough of religion to hate it for what it costs them, but by the voluntary offerings of Christians themselves. Dissenters are *not* Goths; nor does it follow that, because unwilling to be prodigal of another's money, they are therefore niggards of their own.

6. It is but candid to add, for the information of the friends of the opposite system, that as it is not the



amount, so neither is it the form of the tax that voluntaries condemn. The government may substitute, for tithes on agricultural produce, tithes on rent; or for church-rates taken directly from the pockets of the people, grants taken from the public purse; and viewed in relation to their influence on the minds of the thoughtless, the one mode of endowment may be less faulty than the other, but both are alike unchristian. The form of injustice is changed, and the form only; the principle continues as active and as noxious as before. The objects and the hopes of voluntaryism its advocates hesitate not to avow: their efforts can never cease till *every* religious tax and *every* religious prerogative be utterly abolished.\*

7. The misapprehensions that have originated, rather in the hearts than in the heads of our opponents—in their want of charity, rather than in their want of knowledge—it will, perhaps, be useless to attempt to remove.

It has been said, for example, that dissenters hold the principles of voluntaryism through love of popular applause, for party and political purposes; through envy for the promotion of their own secular ends;

\* To speak of certain recent measures of the legislature on the English and Irish churches as likely to afford a satisfactory and lasting settlement of the questions they involve, betrays a want of foresight which thinking men have not seen equalled for some time.

through hatred of the truth for its subversion; through the mere wantonness of mischief for the overthrow of the present system. These charges they must be contented simply to deny, whilst they appeal to the "Searcher of hearts" as their vindicator and judge. With them the question of an ecclesiastical establishment is a question of justice and principle, and perfectly akin to the controversy that occupied the attention of the reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The question these good men had to decide was one of vital moment—whether the scriptures, as divine, are the only rule of faith and practice in religion, or whether the ordinances of man are co-ordinate with them; and this is one of the questions dissenters have to decide now. "I am a baptist, and regard infant sprinkling and sponsorship as most injurious to the spirituality of the church; and yet you punish me, by the denial of privileges, for refusing to adopt them:" or, "I am a member of the Society of Friends, and deny the scriptural origin of the doctrine of your creed on the agency of the Spirit; and yet this doctrine you compel me to approve:" or, possibly, "I am a Socinian, and my belief is—call my faith fancy if you please, still my belief is—that the articles of the church are founded on scholastic and unscriptural distinctions; in my judgment, they are superstition, not Bible truth; and

yet every penny you extort from me is intended to diffuse them;" or, "I am a Christian, and believe the doctrines taught by three-fourths of the clergy to be heresy, and to involve a denial of the 'Lord that bought them;' and yet, if I attend the meeting-house, where the truth is preached as 'it is in Jesus,' my 'name is cast out as evil,' and I am forced to aid in the diffusion of a faith which my Bible tells me is 'accursed.'"

Now, in what respects can it be said, that the principles of popery differ from the practice of this system? *They* are even more tolerant, absolutely less papistical. Popery left men in ignorance, and merely compelled them to support what they did not understand; protestants are compelled to support what they believe to be false. They are, doubtless, allowed to read the Bible for themselves; but only that they may do what they believe it has expressly forbidden, and teach what it has expressly condemned. The pope was scarce guilty of robbery, the protestant state-church is guilty of sacrilege,—the one claimed hearts unoccupied by a better power, the other claims the homage of hearts that are sanctified to Him that formed and redeemed them,—the one took possession of temples unswept and in ruins, the other would seize upon the very temples of God. In truth, the reformation of the nineteenth

century will be second only in time to the reformation of our fathers.\*

And yet the whole question, it has been said, is one of machinery only, and "involves neither theology nor morals." Not a question of morals! when every subject in the kingdom is robbed for the support of the church; forced to diffuse what his conscience condemns; punished if he refuse to the words of men the homage which God alone claims; and not only unremunerated, but even unthanked for his contributions; told that he has but done what he ought, and that before man as before God he is an "unprofitable servant." Even in a despotism such treatment would be called ungracious; in a free country, it is in tendency unconstitutional; in a professedly religious country, and for religious purposes, absolutely impious. Not a question of theology! when this state-machine has been working off and putting into circulation error and falsehood in almost all their forms; when, even now, eight out of its ten thousand ministers are busily disseminating another gospel, and, instead of pure Christianity, are spreading

\* The reformers themselves, as Guizot has remarked, had no conception that they were doing anything else than substituting a legitimate for an illegitimate power. In the principles of its conductors the reformation sought only a change of *masters*; a change of *system*, producing voluntarism and perfect freedom of inquiry, is the result.

something little better than the deadly superstition of the past.

The truth is, that we contend now, as our fathers did, for the free use of the scriptures, for the free interpretation of them, and for the setting up of a pure ministry amongst us. And to secure these blessings—the very blessings which our fathers sought, we call, not for the breaking up of the establishment; not for the alienation of her *private* wealth; but for the withdrawment of state patronage and state endowments. We claim not property, which is no more exclusively ours than it is by right exclusively hers; but we do claim the abrogation of every religious tax and of every religious prerogative; because in principle they violate the rights of conscience, hinder the progress of truth, and, if patiently allowed, will in time bring with them all the errors and injustice of that other superstition, which a past generation succeeded at so immense a cost in sweeping away. Indifference to national wrongs, if we may adopt, with some latitude, the sentiment of a great master of morals and eloquence, is generally found to end sooner or later in disregard for national character and national faith.\*

\* “*Ipsa consuetudo*,” says Cicero, though in a somewhat different sense—“*ipsa consuetudo assentiendi periculosa esse videtur et lubrica.*”—*Acad. Quest. lib. iv.*

8. This controversy has been discussed, it must be confessed, throughout, in a spirit lamentably unchristian. Some, on either side, have displayed a bitterness and a want of candour far more likely to impede the advancement of truth than to promote it. They have violated most grievously the rules of charity. They have not hesitated to judge and condemn what can be known to God only, the untold purposes of the heart. They have ventured to stigmatize their opponents, on the one hand, as "lovers of pelf," and "of the honour of man;" and on the other, as "haters of that which is good," as "impetuous and bustling agitators, in whose breasts politics have engrossed the place of piety; and who are prepared to welcome, with shouts of exultation, the overthrow of those altars which, in holier and better times, upheld the faith and devotion of their fathers." Far from us be such language! National ecclesiastical establishments are, in our estimation, unjust and unchristian; but many of the advocates of them are our "brethren in Christ," and all of them are our brethren in the bonds of our common nature. While, therefore, we "speak the truth," we would "speak it in love." Principles we condemn, not persons; measures, not men; and these solely because we deem them destructive of the highest interests of religion, and opposed to the soundest lessons of philosophy and



experience. We dare not thus denounce and unchristianize. "Another man's servant" we dare not thus judge; and when we are tempted to do it, the recollection of the first similar judgment on record—a judgment not the less impious because given in the form of a suggestion—"Doth Job serve God for nought?" and of the gentle rebuke of our Master—"Forbid, condemn him not," silences our suspicions, and sends us away to "take heed to ourselves."

Nor is this censure of the spirit in which this controversy has been conducted founded solely on a reverence of Christian precept; it is founded not less on a regard for the interests of religion. Nothing, as both history and scripture testify, can be more injurious to the cause of knowledge and of love—holy love, sound knowledge—than the uncharitableness of their advocates. It annihilates the only element that truth can breathe, and live, and fills up the void with the worst passions; it surrounds the mind of inquirers with an atmosphere the very opposite of the calm, holy light in which the Spirit dwells. The time, we hope, is as yet far distant when an irreparable loss will consign the name of one whose language has been quoted to the page of history, and warrant his biographer in softening down the animosity which his spirit of partisan-

ship may have awakened, by a reference to his private virtues; and in the meantime, let Christians, taught at length how little they can do by angry recrimination, try what may be done by the omnipotence of charity and Christian love.



## CHAPTER II.

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### OF THE REAL QUESTION AT ISSUE BETWEEN THE ADVOCATES OF VOLUNTARYISM AND A STATE CHURCH.

“At idola fori omnium molestissima sunt, quæ ex fœdere verborum et nominum se insinuârunt in intellectum. Credunt enim homines, rationem suam verbis imperare; sed fit etiam ut verba vim suam super intellectum retorqueant et reflectant; quod philosophiam et scientias reddidit sophisticas et inactivas. . . . Unde fit ut magnæ et solennes disputationes dominum doctorum sæpè in controversias circa verba et nomina desinant; a quibus (ex more et prudentiâ mathematicorum) incipere consultius foret easque per definitiones in ordinem redigere.”—BACONIS *Verulamii*, *Nov. Org.* lix.

1. In all disputed questions, it is of the last moment that the advocates of opposite systems set down, at the very beginning, the meaning of their words and terms, or at least that they define clearly what notions each doubtful one is supposed to involve. We proceed, therefore, to describe what seem the distinctive features of the *voluntary* and state-establishment systems.

2. By the *religion of the Bible* is meant, the truths and feelings it has taught and sanctioned. The belief of the one and the exercise of the other make up the

*religion of the heart.* The first is a system of divine truth; the second is a class of correspondent affections. Outward obedience is the appropriate and significant result.

3. The essential feature of the *voluntary* system is, that for the maintenance and diffusion of these feelings and truths, religion ought to be indebted to the *voluntary* offering of its friends. To secure the *maintenance* of them, it adopts the prominent principle of free trade, and leaves demand and supply to their own adjustment. To secure the *diffusion* of them, it would call into operation principles not certainly identical with it, but still, as will afterwards be seen, perfectly consistent. It would have all done from love, and nothing from compulsion.\*

4. The system of a *national* establishment holds, on the other hand, that religion should be maintained by the magistrate, at the charge of the whole population. Its essential feature is, that all should be taxed towards its support; while its creed or its patronage has generally and justly been, in return, under the control of the government.

Now, in all existent ecclesiastical establishments, two things are essentially involved:—

\* The very remarkable statements of Dr. Chalmers on the supposed inconsistency between the principles of voluntarism and free trade will be noticed below.

(i.) The institution of taxes and prerogatives by the government in support of religion, to which its subjects are *compelled* to contribute.

(ii.) These taxes are given either to one religious sect, to the *exclusion* of other religious sects, as in England; or to two or more, to the exclusion of the rest, as in some of the German communities; or, lastly, to all religious sects, to the exclusion of the infidel, as was the practice in some of the states of the North American Republic.

5. The privileges of the endowed sect may be of different kinds:—Gifts of property or gifts of power; taxes or prerogatives. Among its *taxes* may be reckoned all national gifts of principal, or grants of interest yearly renewed; national church tithes;\* rates, dues, and drawbacks on the materials of the edifice of the church. Among its more important prerogatives,—its wealth and honours,—those departments of the civil power to which its members are exclusively eligible; and,—lastly, the influence and respectability of its offices; an influence very different from that of personal character, and often transferred with injury to the dissenter, to those that occupy them. These grants of money and of influence are the national endowments of the church.

\* Note B.

6. In these distinctions it will be observed, that the taxes and prerogatives are supposed to be instituted *by the government*. With the bequests of individuals, or the private acts of liberality which have been prompted by the affection of the pious for the Christian good, whether of the community at large, or of special portions of them, dissenters have no wish to interfere. Such funds have originated in the piety or patriotism of men of every religious persuasion; and all the state has to do in the matter is, to see that “effect and fulfilment be given” to the intentions of those that bequeathed them. They may be called establishments of religion, as they supply permanent means of religious instruction; but they make no essential part of a national establishment; and therefore it is no business of ours to investigate or discuss them. The question of a national church does *not* affect its private endowments, but those only that were first given, or are now continued, out of the public purse. Dissenters object not to endowed sects; only to sects endowed by the state.\*

7. It is taken as granted, further, that the privileges of the endowed sect have not been given with the full permission of the whole of the population, and that

\* On this very obvious distinction of national and private endowments, there seems a most unaccountable misunderstanding.—See DR. CHALMERS’ *Lectures*, pp. 9—12.

the justness of them is not universally allowed; and that, therefore, the continuance of them involves some compulsory sacrifice of natural right on the part of those for whose good they are intended. If, in any country, the taxes towards its support be paid with universal good-will,—if the legal and the voluntary be perfectly commensurate,—if what is required by the law would have been given, had the law never been framed, from the promptings of pure affection,—the objections of dissenters must, in part at least, be abandoned; and with them the notable argument of the advocates of establishments, on the defective demand for religion, and the consequent duty of the state to excite and confirm it. We should then have little to which we could object, except the folly of the government, in violating thus needlessly the regulations of free trade and the culpable truculency of the church, in leaving unexercised the willing devotedness of the people, and in entrusting to other hands the power with which God himself had endowed it, and which might prove, in the end, the instrument of such disastrous results. But if, on the contrary, the voluntary and the legal are opposed,—if the spontaneous demand for the instruction of the endowed sect is less than the supply,—if what the law requires is not heartily given, but exacted,—there must be *coercion*. Some, at least, are compelled to aid the

diffusion of feelings and sentiments which they disbelieve and condemn.

8. It is taken as granted, lastly, that all the national wealth and all the national prerogatives with which the religious sect is invested, are intended only for its own members; and that other sects are allowed to share in the bestowment, but not in the advantages of them. This much, at least, is certain, that in all existent establishments, the honours, the influence, the wealth of the church are given to those and to those only who profess to believe the articles of its creed. There can be no promotion without faith. It is, therefore, the orthodox, rather than the consistent, and the orthodox to the exclusion of conscientious persons of another persuasion, that are endowed.

9. Now, if these facts and distinctions be allowed, it will be seen that the national ecclesiastical establishments, which it is intended to examine, are such as receive grants of money or of power from the government to the exclusion of the dissenter, and without the unanimous consent of the people, for the diffusion of religious opinions not always professedly,\* and certainly never infallibly, interpretative of the statements of the Bible. The question we have to investigate is

\* This language applies to practices and articles of the English and Romish churches. The rites and ceremonies of the one, and many of the articles of the other, are confessedly additions to Bible-truth.

this—whether the peaceful subject of a government, who conscientiously believes the religious sentiments and the religious worship of the established sect more or less unscriptural, ought to be *compelled* to support and diffuse them, and then punished, either by direct penalty or by *exclusion* from equal privileges, for his conscientious belief?

If any insist that compulsory taxes for the support of another's faith, or injustice, and inequality of privilege for conscience-sake, or persecution, and government aid, are not included in their notion of a national church, we can only reply, that when national churches are found without them our objections cease.



## CHAPTER III.

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### OF THE INJUSTICE OF A STATE CHURCH.

“Reason is never inconvenient but when it comes to be applied. Mere general truths interfere very little with the passions. They can, until they are roused by a troublesome application, rest in great tranquillity, side by side, with tempers and proceedings the most directly opposite to them. Men want to be reminded, who do not want to be taught; because those original ideas of rectitude to which the mind is compelled to assent when they are proposed, are not always as present to it as they ought to be. When people are gone, if not into a denial, at least into a sort of oblivion of those ideas, when they know them only as barren speculations, and not as practical motives of conduct, it will be proper to press, as well as to offer them to the understanding; and when one is attacked by prejudices, which aim to intrude themselves into the place of law, what is left for us but to vouch and call to warranty those principles of original justice from whence alone our title to every thing valuable in society is derived?”

BURKE, *Tracts on the Popery Laws*, chap. iii. part i.

“Let *him that is taught* in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.”—*Gal.* vi. 6.

1. THE first objection which it is now intended to urge against national ecclesiastical establishments, as they have just been defined, is, that they compel one subject of a government to contribute to the faith of another, and are, therefore, essentially unjust. This objection may be best proved and illustrated by an explanation of the doctrines of free trade.

More than sixty years have elapsed since the author of the "Inquiry into the Causes of the Wealth of Nations" first published his theory of free trade—a theory which has at length found its way into the councils of our government, and is now adopted by the most enlightened statesmen of Europe. In this theory it is held that all establishments for supplying a nation with the ordinary articles of merchandize are injurious, and that demand and supply should be left alone to find their own proper adjustment. To its limitations there is at present no occasion to allude; we merely state its prominent principle, and the persuasion of most economists, that the more generally it is adopted, the more largely will the exertions of labour and the employment of capital prove conducive to the increase of the national wealth.

2. The facts and reasonings on which this system is founded are these:—that bounties and restrictions impose a double tax, or inflict a double injury, without any adequate remuneration to the individuals who suffer from them; and that therefore they involve more or less of injustice. In export *bounties*, for example, (that is, in bounties given to the merchant for the encouragement of exportation,) there is, first, the tax which the public must pay directly towards the bounty itself; and, secondly, the tax paid indirectly in the excess of the home-price of the article beyond

what it would have brought had this unnatural, forced exportation been disallowed. In import bounties, this second tax is taken off the buyer and laid upon the shipowner or merchant, who is, of course, ill able to compete with the chartered company. In *restrictions*, again, that is, in taxes on the importation of articles of commerce, there is a double injury—to the trader and to the public: *his* foreign market is narrowed, and *they* are taxed by the exclusion of foreign manufactured articles, and by the higher remunerating price of their own.

3. Now, in this system, it will be seen, there are two important facts which it is important should be remembered. The *first* is, that its doctrines are intended to apply only to the conduct of governments, or of corporate bodies entrusted with public money for the public good, and not to private persons; the *second*, that its doctrines are founded on justice, and not merely on considerations of policy or finance. Some who, to use the language of Hooker, “talk of truth without having sounded the depths from whence it springs,” have hastily overlooked this first distinction, and have taunted the advocates of voluntarism with forgetfulness of their own creed. “To be consistent,” say they, “you ought to recall your missionaries; withdraw the grants with which your societies eke out the salaries of your ministers; sit

still and wait till the cry of the heathen become loud and urgent, 'Come over and help us;' proportion demand and supply, or you violate your favourite principle."

This charge of inconsistency, we repeat, is altogether unfounded; and to assert that the voluntary efforts of Christians imply a violation of the rules of free trade, bespeaks an utter forgetfulness or a gross misconception of the very principles from which these rules are taken. Government-bounties are unjust, because they involve a needless sacrifice of natural right; they take from the many for the advantage of the few; they impose taxes from which neither the public nor the government, and but seldom "the chartered," derive profit; they are founded in wrong, and productive generally of unmixed evil. Private endowments, on the other hand, are voluntary, just, and often useful; they impose no tax, inflict no injury, and, therefore, to compare them with state bounties is to confound "things that differ," and to condemn, under a common name, practices that have scarcely one feature of resemblance. Free trade says not to the church, that it should leave alone the world; but only to the government, that it should leave alone the church.

4. To illustrate this distinction, let it be supposed that the English, like the Chinese, were eaters of

opium, while the inhabitants of the other two divisions of the empire held the favourite gum in abhorrence; and that it was thought desirable to distribute it, either at the expense of the community, or of certain benevolent individuals, at a less than the market price, among the families of the poor. Could it be called a contemptuous outrage on the principles of free trade, if a number of merchants were to import the article and sell it at fifty per cent. below what it cost them, paying the other fifty out of their own funds? or would it be just to regard their efforts as at all analogous to the conduct of a government who might impose a tax upon the three kingdoms for the purpose of supplying the article at a lower rate, and with the effect of injuring the private unendowed company, by contracting their sales, while their expenditure continued almost unchanged? It is obvious, at the first glance, that in the government bounty there is a double injustice, of which the company is wholly guiltless: first, to the two parts of the kingdom where opium is never used, and to the wealthy and poor of the third part who choose to pay for their own; and, secondly, to the merchant who might wish to embark in the trade, but is discouraged by the monopoly. The public as taxed, and the public as traders, are both injured. The private company, on the other hand, imports with its own, gives of its

own, while no one is taxed towards it. The market of other companies, who may be unwilling to sell at a loss, is, doubtless, narrowed by *its* sales, just as it might be narrowed by the sales of the government; but between the one and the other there is this vast difference: the benevolent company does what other companies may do if they please,—sells at a loss, and supplies the deficiency out of its own—*volenti non fit injuria*; the government does what no private company may do,—sells at a loss, and supplies the deficiency out of another's. Antonio may make a luxury of well-doing, if it please him, and in gratifying his taste may lend his ducats without interest, and Shylock be uninjured; but if the public treasure be so invested, he may justly complain, that the commonwealth first taxes him for its protection, and then devotes the tax to a purpose which makes that protection useless, by ruining the very trade which it ought to have been the object of the government to promote. Venice may not do all that is done by its merchants.

The endowments of private benevolence, then, whether intended for the supply of articles of commerce or of literary and religious instruction, bear no analogy to state bounties; they impose no unequal tax, prohibit no fair competition, and therefore are not inconsistent with those great prin-

ciples of justice on which the free-trade system is founded.

5. This distinction, which Dr. Chalmers and others have overlooked, is of the last importance. It vindicates free trade; it illustrates its consistency with the voluntary exertions of Christians for the diffusion of religious truth; thus affording another example of the harmony of the conclusions of philosophy and the precepts of the gospel; and, lastly, it may serve to remove from the minds of the advocates of this enlightened system the prejudices that may have been deposited there against voluntarism, as if it were equally opposed with state ecclesiastical establishments to their favourite views. It is such establishments, or, more generally, taxes imposed for the good of other than those who pay them, and not any form of voluntary exertion, that Smith and Turgot, and modern political economists, have so loudly and so justly condemned.

6. The *second* fact connected with this theory is one to which we have already referred,—the principles on which it rests are principles of essential justice, not of mere policy or finance. Demand and supply should be left alone, not only because it is useless for the government to stimulate or control them, but because it is unjust. If Scotland and Ireland were taxed, as we have supposed, for the comfort



of the opium-eaters of England, every candid person would cry out that such taxation was unequal. That two nations should be compelled to contribute to the luxuries or taste of a third, without any direct benefit to themselves, would be universally regarded as a violation of every principle of equity, which nothing could justify, and of which no real bounty in trade affords even a solitary example. In mentioning such analogies as invention could supply to an intelligent man of business, but little acquainted with the history of commerce, he assured us, in terms of great earnestness, that no government could ever dream of imposts so absurd and unjustifiable: the only instance he remembered was in the case of religion—"an anomaly," as he expressed it, "which he had ever been at a loss to understand." When the practical good sense of a people is against a system, it is high time it were changed.

7. It is to bounties on the importation of articles of trade that ecclesiastical establishments bear the closest resemblance. Like the supposed bounty upon opium, they impose a double tax. They compel the majority to contribute to the comfort and advantage of the few; and they stigmatize and discourage all who might be inclined to supply religious instruction in a better and purer form, at a less cost. In the British empire, the Romanist pays for the support of protestantism; the

protestant for the support of Romanism; the churchman for the doctrines of the presbytery; the presbyterian for the articles of the church; the Christian for the dogmas of the Shasters; the disciple of Brahma for the extension of the gospel; and the dissenter of every unendowed sect for the support of them all. In what form the tax is paid,—whether in money or in power, in national tithes or in national honours,—or by what numbers, are matters of small moment; it is enough that he is compelled to contribute a *bounty* for the diffusion of the opinions of others, which operates as a *restriction* on the diffusion of his own.

8. Now, setting aside the consideration of the error or the truth of these systems, or supposing that one system only was supported, we still ask, if you hold it wrong that I should be taxed for my neighbour's wine, or my neighbour's sugar? If you are so firmly persuaded of their injustice, that you would take off all bounties on imported articles, condemn, as monuments of the avarice or ignorance of other days, all attempts to impede the efforts of industry by restrictions, or force her progress by rewards, and have withdrawn all taxes except such as are absolutely necessary to meet the current expenses of the government, why should I be taxed for my neighbour's religion, build churches I never enter, support ministers I never hear,

and diffuse doctrines which I believe the Bible has condemned? There may be wisdom in such laws, but we defy the advocates of free trade and of equal rights to prove them consistent with their own creed.

9. The popular defence of these taxes is remarkable:—As a nation, it is held, we have approved them; they, therefore, who think them wrong ought to leave the community, as their fathers did. They are, at least, not compelled to continue in a country whose laws, as they think, are so flagrantly unjust.

Now, granting that it were—possible for nine millions of people to expatriate twelve millions of their countrymen, and—just that they should be compelled to dispose of their trade and property for their conscientious views, at a serious loss, and—wise to banish so many of the firmest friends of constitutional liberty whom our country has ever known, it is still somewhat difficult to resist the impression, that this system surely has *not* been framed for the advantage of religion, for the salvation of the very persons whom you would thus deprive of its blessings. The Romanists of Ireland have refused tithes for the support of protestantism, whose sole end is their conversion to the protestant faith: will you promote the object of this institution by transporting them to Mexico or Spain? The dissenters of England cry

loudly against the injustice of religious taxes—taxes instituted for the express purpose of making and keeping them and their children Christians: will that purpose be answered by sending them to add to the numbers and alleged destitution of the voluntaryism of America? Either let us hear no more of the privileges of dissenters in being allowed to follow their pilgrim-fathers, or let us be told plainly, that establishments are not for the salvation of the body of the people, but for the comfort and secular advantage of their own members.

10. The philosophic defence of them is scarcely more pertinent, and certainly less candid. The common minds of our nation get rid of the objection of injustice by allowing the alternative of banishment; the philosopher answers it by denying the justness of the transference of the principles of free trade in business to free trade in Christianization, and on this ground—that between the spiritual appetite of men for religious truth and their physical appetite for the necessities or the luxuries of life there is no resemblance. The want of food creates the appetite of hunger, and hunger seeks to be appeased; but ignorance creates no appetite for knowledge, no hungering and thirsting after truth, no spontaneous movement towards instruction; and therefore, it is held, though the one appetite may be left alone to seek its own gratifica-

tion, the other must be stimulated before it will seek to be supplied.\*

11. The reality and the justness of this distinction no one can for a moment hesitate to allow. Christians of every name have long been familiar with the melancholy facts on which it is founded, and as Christians have acted upon them. Unhappily, however, it proves nothing relatively to the duty of the government. It is true that because for articles of trade demand and supply may be left alone to adjust themselves, therefore government need not interfere with them; but it is by no means a necessary consequence of this principle, that because for the truths of religion demand and supply cannot safely be left alone, therefore they must be supported and diffused by the government.

The first argument is conclusive:—

Wherever demand and supply can safely be left to their own adjustment, *no one* need interfere with them.

But in trade they may be left to their own adjustment.

Therefore, *no one* need interfere with them.

\* Such is an argument that has received no mean support in our own time: Dr. Chalmers and Lord Brougham have been in the habit of repeating it for some years. See CHALMERS, on *The Use and Abuse of Literary and Ecclesiastical Endowments*: Glasgow, 1827.

The second argument is deceptive :—

Wherever demand and supply cannot safely be left to their own adjustment, *some one* must interfere with them.

But in religion they cannot safely be left to their adjustment.

Therefore, *government* must needs interfere with them.

The first conclusion is logically true ; the second, it will be seen, is logically false : “no one” certainly excludes the members of the government ; while “some one” of the second syllogism does not necessarily include them. To make this celebrated distinction at all available, we must adopt for the first premiss a proposition notoriously false—viz., “With whatever cannot well be left alone government must interfere ;” or, for the second, some proposition that takes as granted the whole question at issue between the advocates of state establishments and ourselves.

12. Besides, we deny that this distinction affects our reasoning ; and to urge it in defence of state endowments implies a forgetfulness of the very foundation on which the free-trade system rests. Its grand principle is, not the uselessness of government interference in exciting or regulating demand, but its essential injustice if it be excited or regulated by a public tax ; so that the two cases are not different in



the only one feature in which a government should regard them. It is a matter of secondary importance whether the pistoles go to the poor-box of the church or to the treasure-box of the brigand company, who have murdered to obtain them ; the one appropriation may be more "blessed" than the other, but neither will make reparation to the injured law, or can possibly be accepted by Him who loves mercy and hates robbery for a burnt offering. A tax for my neighbour's religion, be it paid in money or in blood, is at least as unrighteous as a tax for my neighbour's opium, or my neighbour's wine. It is a legalized theft, or a legalized murder ; and to assert that it is less useless is but "faint praise," if it be not shewn to be more just.

13. It is, in fact, this injustice which, as much as anything else, clothes the whole question with a most momentous importance. Were our own privileges alone concerned, we would willingly forego them ; but when we remember that besides, there are involved the common rights of men, the interests of our common humanity, the purity of religion, the peace of the church, the salvation of the impenitent, the acceptableness even of our own worship, we feel that to claim our privileges as men is to do our duty as Christians, and that present struggles alone can secure permanent peace. The system has lashed a whole nation into rebellion,—and who knows not that



rebellion against a temporal governor is the worst possible preparation for the obedience of the gospel; has stained the else-spotless robes of truth with human blood; has literally changed the cup of the Lord into the cup of demons, for robbery and murder have filled it; has mingled with the songs and the symphonies of the church the wailings of the widow and the fatherless; has made religion a forced instead of a "reasonable service;" has written upon every tenth sheaf, and upon every state-built church, "Abomination unto the Lord." These things it has done, and Christians have kept silence: but now, they must keep silence no more. The souls of men are at stake, and they are bound to interpose. The voice of humanity and of justice, which is, in truth, the voice of God, calls upon them loudly "to do justly, and to love mercy," to remove the burden now lying heavily upon the oppressed. To continue "lookers-on" during the approaching contest is to incur the guilt of aiding the oppressor, and probably of suffering religion to become buried under the ruins of the church.\*

\* One of the greatest evils under which France laboured at the commencement of this century was, the want of dissenters. There was no body of Christians to remove the impression which had been produced by the establishment of that country,—that religion was nothing else than a fortunate system of personal aggrandizement, framed for the advantage of the favoured sect.

14. The conclusions to which these facts and reasonings lead are obvious: they shew—

1. That the principles of free trade are principles of justice.
2. That they are violated, not by the voluntary beneficence of dissenters, but certainly by the prerogatives of chartered sects; and
3. That these prerogatives are essentially unjust.

Till, therefore, injustice become expedient, (Mic. vi. 8,) ecclesiastical state-establishments must be condemned.

15. Driven from all arguments in defence of the justice of religious taxes, the advocates of the existent system have sought refuge in revelation; and if not in the New, yet certainly in the Old Testament, they fancy that they find some plea for the continuance of them. “That the labourer is worthy of his hire,” is confessedly a principle of justice; and if so, the only question is, by whom, and in what form, should it be paid? a question for ever answered, it is held, in the history of Jewish and patriarchal times:—“All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s, holy unto the Lord.” (Lev. xxvii. 30.)

But mark the following facts:—

1. All tithes paid under the law were polluted, till a tenth of them had been presented as a heave-

offering, (Num. xviii. 28, 32;) and hence the Jews regard this law as obsolete, since there is no priest, no temple, no altar, to hallow them.

Is this custom continued, or is it practicable? If not, tithes are unsanctified, “there is sin upon them.”

2. All tithes were paid under the law, as part of the inheritance of the Levites. They that had tithes had no land, and were forbidden to hold it.

Can such a restriction be pleaded in defence of the tithes of the English church?

3. The annual tithes were shared by the offerers of them, (Deut. xiv. 23.) The triennial tithes by the Levite, the offerer, the fatherless, the stranger, and the widow, (verses 28, 29.)

Are the tithe-gatherers of this country prepared to allow this appropriation of the “gifts” of the people?

If, therefore, the tithes of Canaan were polluted till *ceremonially* sanctified,—if the right of them belonged to the tribe of Levi in particular, and in compensation of the twelfth of the land of promise,—and not to them only, but also to the owner and his household at the time of their offering, and every third year to the stranger and fatherless,—it follows,

that ministers of this day, who acknowledge none of these conditions, can have no just title to tithes founded on the Mosaic law.\*

The examples of Abraham and of Jacob, and all arguments drawn from them, are equally impertinent; they are, in truth, so preposterous, that nothing less than a bad cause could have induced good men to support them. Jacob vowed and *voluntarily* offered, not to a priest, but directly to God. Till, therefore, a voluntary gift to the Almighty and a compulsory payment to man are shewn to be perfectly analogous, this case must be confessed to be altogether beside the point in dispute.

“But the example of Abraham,” it will be replied,

\* “As well under the gospel as under the law—say our English divines, *and they only of all protestants*—is tithes. That the law of tithes is in force under the gospel, all other protestant divines, though equally concerned, yet constantly deny. When any of ours has attempted in Latin to maintain this argument, though a man would think they might suffer him, without opposition, in a point equally tending to the advantage of all ministers, yet they cease not to oppose him, as in a doctrine not fit to pass unopposed under the gospel; which shews the modesty and contentedness of these foreign pastors with the maintenance given them; their sincerity also in truth, though less gainful, and the avarice of ours, who, through the love of their old papistical tithes, consider not the weak arguments, or rather conjectures and surmises, which they bring to defend them.”—MILTON *on Hirelings*, Works, Symmons’ ed. iii. 362.

It is observable that, under the law, the priests had assigned them only a tithe of the tithes, or a hundredth of the produce. For a learned examination of the purposes to which these tithes were devoted, see *Hottinger de Decimis Judæorum*, exereit. vi<sup>a</sup>.

“you must allow to be conclusive.” By no means; for observe—1. Not examples, but express precepts, are to regulate the actions of the Christian. 2. The Holy Spirit does not even commend his conduct: it is merely stated, that the representative of the Levites honoured the representative of Christ, (Heb. vii.,) thereby proving that *his* priesthood is greater than *theirs*. 3. This tithe was a voluntary offering of respect, not of reward, from one who was a priest and the representative of priests, to one who was both priest and king, and therefore the representative of the Saviour. 4. Melchizedec had previously bestowed presents upon Abraham; he had given him provision enough to refresh his whole army, and, as an expression of reverence, Abraham honoured him with a tenth of the *spoils*. First, let all these facts be proved to correspond to facts connected with the present system; let it be shewn that voluntary homage and compulsory maintenance are one,—that what Abraham did is to be done now,—that because a *priest* paid tithes to one who was both priest and king,—therefore the *people* must pay them to one who is a priest only; and then, unless it be possible to enumerate points of difference as important as those we have now given, we shall be ready to allow some authority to the example.

“But the scribes and pharisees paid them,” it will

be added; and in so doing they had the approbation of our Master. "These ought ye to have done." (Matt. xxiii. 23.) Doubtless, for the law was not yet abrogated; its precepts therefore were still binding. Besides, even though it were right that the chief teachers of the people should *pay* tithes previous to the destruction of the temple, it will be difficult to prove, from their example, that therefore now they ought to *receive* them. To *take* tenths and to *pay* tenths are phrases scarcely synonymous.

16. To our own mind there is something eminently impious in these attempts to lay to the "fatherhood of God" the iniquities and injustice of this system. To seize the last means of subsistence from the poor, whose claims to a part of the tithes of the country, founded either on the Mosaic or on old English law, are to the full as just as those of the church; to sue and imprison; to take priestly dues, like the sons of Eli, "by force," and all for the support of a religious faith which the sufferer believes the Bible has condemned, are practices in themselves sufficiently awful: but that they all should be perpetrated under the colour of divine authority, and sanctioned by certain pretences to divine right, is to copy too closely the example of the servant of the prophet, (2 Kings, v. 22,) to take God's name, not in vain only, but in violence; to commit sacrilege of the foulest kind; to



prostitute the religion of peace to the purposes of cruelty and blood. Can it be a matter of surprise, that the "offering of the Lord is abhorred," (1 Sam. ii. 12, &c.;) or that the protestant church is but hardly able to keep her ground against the encroachments of Rome? The truth is, that she is "smitten;" her form, though not wholly destitute of life, is death-like and powerless; and our fear is, that, unless her exactions speedily cease, she may be driven out from the "presence of our Master," and "the leprosy" be commanded to "cleave unto her and her seed even for ever."

17. And while it is thus impossible to defend this iniquitous system from the books of the Old Testament, it is equally impossible to find even the semblance of an argument on its behalf in the commands or the spirit of the New; it is, on the contrary, expressly condemned as eminently inconsistent with equity and divine precept. "Know ye not," says the apostle, "that they who minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? so also the Lord hath ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel." The law and the maintenance of the law are both abolished, while, in their stead, a new rule and a new tribe, "of whom no man giveth attendance at the *altar*," and



therefore cannot thence receive tithes, have been introduced.

A very superficial attention to the New Testament will be sufficient to convince all but the most prejudiced, that the questions which the friends of endowed sects had thought so clearly answered by the facts of the Jewish history receive an answer directly opposite in the precepts of Christ and the experience of his immediate followers.

1. It will be found, that the recompence of the ministers of the gospel is regarded as the free-will offering of the gratitude of such as receive them. "Into whatsoever house ye enter, if the son of peace be there, in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give." (Luke, x. 5, 7.) "So let each give according as he purposeth in his heart, not grudgingly, or of compulsion; for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Cor: ix. 7.) "As every one hath received the gift, so minister the same one to another." (1 Pet. iv. 10.) "Ye sent once and again to my necessity, not because I desire a gift; but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." (Philip. iv. 16, 17.)\* They that speak so sneeringly

\* For centuries the pastors of early churches held that they ought to live upon the alms of their hearers. Such is still the opinion of the English church. Her dues and taxes are still called the "free-will offerings of the people."

of the "voluntary system" would do well to remember that, with all its weakness and degradation, it diffused the gospel over the whole of the Roman world long before the third century after the death of its founder; and that it is the only one which the Holy Spirit himself has expressly sanctioned. Even though from these facts it should not secure universal acceptance, it ought at least to secure universal respect.

2. And by whom, it will be next asked, is this maintenance to be given? Reason and scripture agree in the reply: "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." (Gal. vi. 6; Rom. xv. 27.) "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter that we reap *your* carnal things?" (1 Cor. ix. 11.) Where apostles had sown, there they reaped; but ministers of established sects, so long as there are dissenters in the land, "reap where they have never sown,"—"gather where they have never strawed." During the first four centuries of the church, there was between pastor and people a mutual dependence—unbroken, except when the pastor chose, like Paul, to forego his right, (1 Cor. ix. 12)—of people for instruction upon their pastor, and of pastor for support upon *his* people;\* and this is the only practice explicitly acknowledged under the gospel. Let not

\* See note C for additional illustrations.

dissenters, then, be contented with the forced admissions of compulsionists, that their system cannot be founded either on law or on grace,—on the dispensation of justice, or on the dispensation of love.\* Not only is it not founded upon them; by both it is emphatically condemned. Murder or theft is not more inconsistent with the precepts of the decalogue, or the commonest principles of equity, than are forced contributions towards the diffusion or maintenance of the gospel with the claims and revealed intentions of God. The voluntary support of the ministers of the gospel by those who acknowledge their mission is the only system which has received the sanction of the Bible.

\* It is a lamentable illustration of the slow progress of truth when secular interests are involved, that this admission of Dr. Chalmers' is regarded with suspicion by many of his brethren. The doctrine of "divine right" is so venerable for its antiquity, and, if allowed, so useful in discussion, that few are willing to surrender it till forcibly expelled. They cannot perceive, it would seem, that such concessions never conciliate, but rather exasperate, an opponent. It is in this controversy as in their struggles for civil rights: whatever dissenters have *asked* has been denied them, whatever they have proved, or *demand*ed, has been given.

## CHAPTER IV.

OF THE PERSECUTION INVOLVED IN THE EXISTENCE OF  
A STATE CHURCH.

“Partiality and *law* are contradictory terms: neither the merits nor the ill deserts, neither the wealth and importance, nor the indigence and obscurity, of the one part or of the other, can make any alteration in this fundamental truth. For if we once prevail upon ourselves to depart from the strictness and integrity of this principle in favour even of a considerable party, the argument will hold for one that is less so; and thus we shall go on narrowing the bottom of public right, until step by step we arrive, though after no very long or very forced deduction, at what one of our poets calls the *enormous faith*—the faith of the many created for the advantage of a single person. I can see no glimmering of distinction to evade it, nor is it possible to allege any reason for the proscription of a large part of the kingdom which would not hold equally to support, under parallel circumstances, the proscription of the whole.”—BURKE, *Tracts on the Popery Laws*, chap. iii. part i.

1. IN stating broadly that *persecution* is essentially involved in all systems framed and supported by the government for the diffusion of opinions without the unanimous consent of the people, we state a fact which, it is hoped, will appear obvious in the end, but which is very often forgotten, even by dissenters themselves.

The common answer to this charge is curious,

though by no means remarkable either for novelty or truth:—"The liberty of toleration," it is said, "is allowed. Dissenters have sufferance, if not power; permission to worship God as they please: and what can they wish more? The factious opponents of the 'powers that be' are proverbially ungrateful; and dissenters should be careful lest their ingratitude induce others to class them rather with the friends of faction than with the friends of truth. Besides, they should remember the apostolic precept, 'Study to be quiet,' and that other, 'Meddle not with them that are given to change.'"

2. The liberty of toleration! Was ever heard so gross a contradiction of terms? Toleration is a mitigation of punishment, not a definition of liberty; and when that punishment is inflicted for conscientious views, the mitigation of it deserves no other thanks than are due to *moderate* persecution; and even these must be given, not to the church, but to the people and the state. The working of the system may be lenient, but the system itself is unchanged. It is now what it has ever been; it retains the same offices, principles, and canons, and refuses to alter or repeal them. The toleration of dissenters is the proof of its weakness, not of its love.\*

\* The clergy have ever been the enemies of religious freedom. All bills introduced into parliament, during the last fifty years, for

And even if this boasted boon had been as certainly granted by the church as it has ever been denied, "for the ease of weak consciences," and in pity for the ignorant and the erring, there were no gratitude due for the gift. We should still regard her as we might a soft-hearted thief, who first asked our money, and then, on our pleading poverty and hunger, gave us a shilling out of it to carry us to the next town. The rights of religious equality are all

the protection of dissenters, were received coldly by the bishops. In their most liberal hours, the ministers intimated that "they would not oppose them;" and here their praise ends. Now, either these measures were just or unjust; if unjust, how are we to explain the submission of the bench; if just, how their hostility or indifference? To this general character there are, doubtless, noble exceptions; but the high-church party are the fair representatives of the spirit and tendencies of the system. The language of Guizot, descriptive of every ecclesiastical establishment, may be applied most appropriately to the English church:—"L'église s'est toujours présentée comme l'interprète, le défenseur de deux systèmes, du système théocratique ou du système impérial Romain, c'est à dire, du despotisme, tantôt sous la forme religieuse, tantôt sous la forme civile. Faible, l'église se mettait à couvert sous le pouvoir absolu des empereurs; forte, elle le revendiquait pour son propre compte, au nom de son pouvoir spirituel. Sans doute, l'église a souvent invoqué les droits des peuples contre le mauvais gouvernement des souverains; souvent même elle a approuvé et provoqué l'insurrection. Souvent aussi elle a soutenu auprès des souverains les droits et les intérêts des peuples. Mais quand la question des garanties politiques s'est posée entre le pouvoir et la liberté, quand il s'est agi d'établir un système d'institutions permanentes, qui missent véritablement la liberté à l'abri des invasions du pouvoir, en général, l'église s'est rangée du côté du despotisme."—*VI<sup>me</sup> Leçon.*



our own ; and to boast of allowing the exercise of some of them is to take credit for giving us one part of our property while three parts are withheld.

3. By persecution is meant, in its ecclesiastical sense, the infliction of penalties on persons of another religious persuasion than our own for the rejection of our favourite faith ; and with this crime—this act of treason against the very majesty of truth—we hold all governments that endow a particular order of clergy, however tolerant, to be chargeable. If it be possible, let the charge be repelled.

But let us examine, for one moment, what this grave accusation involves. By religion is meant the truths and the feelings which God has approved in relation to his own worship and character, and which he has written, as some unhappily think, on the tablet of the heart *only* ; or as others, more justly, in the pages of the Bible. Of the meaning of the terms in which he has been pleased to reveal them, there is confessedly a diversity of opinion. Some deny what others allow ; some practise what others condemn.

Now, amidst this diversity of faith, this one rule must be universally acknowledged, that every man must believe and act as in his judgment the highest authority has enjoined ; so that the *immediate* guide of the belief and the actions of men in matters of religious worship is their own conscience. To obey



its dictates is right; to reject or violate them is wrong.

If any prefer to add to the Bible another judge, either tradition or the church, the duty of men is still unchanged. If, in my judgment, the new arbiter is unscriptural, his decisions I am bound to resist, when they are opposed to what I believe to be decisions of the Bible; or, if they be admitted, I must still act upon them according to my own persuasion of their meaning. My opinion of what is right or wrong may be changed; my rule of action and my rule of faith is the same as before. In spite of the sneers of Chesterfield and the calumnies of modern papists,\* it must be allowed, that in matters of religion his own conscience—his own intrepertation of the divine law—must ever be the rule of the life of the Christian.†

The authority of the New Testament on the *duty* of private judgment is overwhelmingly conclusive.

\* One word here. Popery is nothing more or less than the compulsion of conscience—spiritual despotism; protestantism aims at the establishment of religious equality or religious liberty—the overthrow of all systems that seek forcibly the repression or the propagation of religious tenets.

The answer to Chesterfield is obvious. Whenever the religious creed of a sect professedly interferes with the person or property of the subject, the magistrate is bound to interpose. Religious liberty has no connexion with secular licentiousness.

† The fashion of our times is to call upon men to “hear the church,” and to suspect their own judgment. A more useless exhortation was never given; it is like bidding men to close their

That Christ himself recognised no other guide is obvious. He exhorted the people “to take heed how they heard”—“to search the scriptures,” doubtless that they might interpret them—to compare with his own character the description of the Messiah given by “Moses and the prophets.” His disciples he warned against the assumption and admission of undue authority—“Call no man your father upon the earth, neither be ye called masters;” neither impose your opinions upon others, nor suffer them to impose theirs upon you. When the Sadducees, ignorant of “the scriptures and the power of God,” proposed a question relative to the resurrection, mark how the Saviour answered them—“Have ye not read?”—then quoted a text, and shewed by reasoning the truth of the doctrine they denied. The gospel appeals throughout to the judgment of the poor. Its miracles—“its gracious words”—its sublime disclosures—all were intended to *prove* the divinity of the Saviour’s mission.

The apostles copied closely the pattern of Christ. In addressing the Corinthians, the proudest and most prejudiced of the primitive churches, Paul acknowledges their privilege, and exhorts them to use it.

eyes, that they may look through a telescope at the stars. If I must do as the church bids me, I must surely interpret the church’s language, and then act upon my own interpretation. I still act as I *think* the highest authority has enjoined. Whether that authority be the Bible or the church is another question.—See note D.

“I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say.” The heathen, he tells us in another epistle, are condemned, because they had forgotten the “invisible things of God, which are clearly seen, being *understood* from the things that are made.” “Let every man,” says he again, “be fully persuaded in his own mind,” and let his actions be consistent with his persuasion, “for whatever is against it is sin.” (Rom. xiv.) The people of Berea were commended for examining into the truth of the apostle’s doctrines; the magistrates professed themselves “no judges in such matters,” and the truth prospered. “The reasoning” of the apostle, as Luke calls the addresses of Paul, was accompanied, as might have been hoped, with the “demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”\*

To exercise our reason, then, in searching the scriptures, and to believe as we understand God has spoken, is a *duty* we owe to Himself, and is consequently paramount to every other. They, therefore, who punish others for acting and believing as in their judgment divine authority has commanded, are, in truth, “fighting against God.” Did the endowment of a religious sect rob me of my rights as a citizen, I might bear it,—I may forego privileges, if it please me,—but if it inflict penalties on the discharge of duty, if its claims and his be opposed, if it punish for

\* Compare Acts, xviii. 4, with 1 Cor. ii. 4.

conscience' sake, it becomes identified with his enemies, and therefore I cannot, I dare not, but regard it with the deepest abhorrence. Hatred of the system is part of my religion, and its overthrow one of the triumphs of the faith.

4. That all sects endowed with national power or national wealth have been favourable to persecution is certain. The history of them—whether catholic or protestant, both so called by courtesy—instead of being the history of truth and love, is nothing better than the history of cruelty and wrong: every page of it is written in blood.

That their canons and courts display a persecuting spirit is equally certain: they inflict upon the refractory fines, penances, and excommunication; while the excommunicated are excluded from the privilege of recovering property by law, of giving evidence, and of Christian burial. Till within the last twenty years, the spirit of them had pervaded all the civil appointments of the government. No subject, however otherwise qualified, could fill any public office unless he conformed to the worship of the established sect.

Whatever objections, however, might be founded on these, the tendencies or the adjuncts of the system, we are contented to withhold. We shall suppose that all the civil disabilities of dissenters are removed,—that Jews and infidels are alike eligible to offices of trust,

—that the theory of our constitution and the practice are one,—that no distinction is recognised but that of good and bad subject,—and still we assert fearlessly, that in the establishment of a religious sect there is the very essence of persecution,—the infliction of penalties on all who conscientiously dissent from the articles of “the church.”

5. Now, in return for this rejection of all but the essentials of an establishment, we must be allowed to take as granted, that the sin of persecution does not depend upon the number or even upon the actual infliction of penalties. If penalties be enacted and never inflicted, denounced and never undergone, they are equally unchristian. Spain is not the less intolerant because the inquisition has done its work, and dissent has ended in the union of universal indifference or universal unbelief. Nor is the amount of them a question of moment. All compulsion and restraint, all punishment, is either a duty or a sin: if the first, all privileges granted to heretics are alike sinful;\* if the second, all disabilities inflicted or threatened are alike unjust. It is a persecuting spirit that the gospel condemns.

\* We waive the question of the truth or error of the religious system which is endowed. Each man must regard the religion which his judgment tells him is the true one as binding; so Warburton, Whately, and others, allow. Besides, establishments inflict a penalty, not on error, but on private judgment,—one of the duties, be it remembered, of the Christian.

6. The first class of penalties of which dissenters complain is, their exclusion from all interest in the wealth and temporal privileges of the endowed sect. The ecclesiastical revenues of the three kingdoms may be rated at the annual value of twelve millions.\* A part of this sum, at least, was appropriated to its present or a similar purpose out of national property, by the prerogative of the crown, or by the decisions of parliament. It is in every sense, therefore, an annual grant from the nation; and yet in the offices amongst which it is distributed, the dissenter, however pious or talented, can have no share. Because he cannot conscientiously subscribe, it is decreed he shall never be promoted.

Or, to take an illustration more extensively applicable; it is notorious that, during the last few years, a sum of not less than two millions has been taken out of the public purse, and given towards the building of new churches for the worship and convenience of the endowed: it has been taken out in money, and paid to the church-goers of the nation in mortar and stone. Now, if the dissenters are in number only one-half of the population of Great Britain and Ireland,—and on the lowest calculation they are a decided majority,—they have paid, at least, one million for church-building alone, without any return; and just because they

\* See note E.



are dissenters that return has been denied them. Whether this sum has been paid directly into the coffers of the state church, or collected in general taxes, and given with unequal hand by the government, is a matter of small moment ; it is enough that I, as a subject, am compelled to contribute, and as a dissenter am refused all share of the contributions. We hesitate not to assert, that one-third of the churches built since the commencement of this century are rightfully, if not legally, the property of dissenters, and are now withheld from them because they cannot conscientiously conform to the worship or doctrines of the establishment. The arrears of past centuries may be less easily settled ; but estimate them at what you will, they involve the very essence of popery : they inflict fines and punishment upon conscience. Were we requested to define what is meant by an establishment of religion, we could do it in no better terms than these :—An establishment of religion is a tax of three millions, more or less, *for* the diffusion of the opinions of others, and an additional tax of three millions, less or more, *on* the diffusion of my own. It is, in all cases, a tax upon private judgment, and, as nine hundred and ninety out of the thousand millions of our world will allow, a tax upon truth.

7. But there are other rights which men have



agreed in prizing more than those of money—the rights of influence and of reputation; and of these dissenters are most unjustly deprived. The evils of a bad name, and of contracted usefulness, these, therefore, are among the persecutions of the dominant sect.

Whatever is established is invested with credit, respectability, and power. There is a “majesty doth hedge around” a government, and all it sanctions, which nothing can remove so long as the ruling power is preserved from contempt. Its favour puts a value upon men and opinions, as its superscription stamps a value upon coins, so that the subject takes them, not according to their weight, but according to the denomination it is pleased to inscribe upon them. It makes them current, and by the same act declares all others counterfeit and worthless. The holders of the “genuine” are in consequence placed in a position which the holders of the base can never occupy: the first are “honourable men, all honourable men;” the second are “setters forth of strange gods,” “utterers of base coin,” radicals in politics, deists in faith, bankrupts in character. Their dissent is a crime too indelible for any virtue to alleviate or any merits to remove.

The history of a thousand parishes proves the correctness of these statements. The office of the clergy-

man is ever an office of influence and honour ; that of the dissenter an office of proscription and weakness. The presence of the one is ever expected at the tables of the wealthy, and gratefully welcomed in the cottages of the poor ; the presence of the other is generally regarded with coldness and suspicion, excepting amongst his own people, whose hearts have been won over by the attractive power of his piety and usefulness. The one is, "our respected clergyman," the other is, "the methodist parson." In all schemes of Christian philanthropy, at all meetings for benevolent or religious objects, the one, if he think it right to attend, fills the first place ; the other, as constantly, the second. Even the pious of the neighbourhood warn their families against the "seductions of the meeting-house ;" and when they hear, still incredulous, of the devotedness of the minister, hint fears of schism, methodism, delusion : terms all of them of establishment origin, that have a delightful facility of throwing the whole business under suspicion, without any trouble of making definite charges of extravagance or hypocrisy, and attempting to prove them.

The evils and injustice of this system admit of illustrations almost endless. A dissenting minister enters a parish too large for the superintendence of one pastor, where a meeting has been held for some years, possibly since the times of our puritan fathers ;

he is a man of excellent education and of devoted piety, with all the tastes, the modes of thought and feeling, which a life of study brings; he finds the people affectionate, but poor,—the wealthier Christians of the neighbourhood having worshipped from time immemorial in the parish church,—and, from their want of refinement, ill able to enter into his views, his projects, his hopes. Possibly, his wife is one of the same tastes with himself; delicate and sensitive; ever ready for her Master's work, but still ever yearning for the company and sympathy of intelligent Christians. Unhappily, however, she is a dissenter; her faith is not, on all points, the faith of the government, and therefore she must be contented to struggle on as she best can, in a far less extensive sphere of usefulness than she ought to have filled, and must have filled, had not government taught the people “to point the finger” and “wag the head” at their fellow-subjects,—to look with coldness on all religionists but those of the favoured church. Some there are who reckon these “contumelies of tyranny” among the worst parts of the system; and they who know how “dishonour and reproach,” unmerited, “break the heart,” will probably admit the justness of their decision.

Now, if this contraction of usefulness occur in a parish where the gospel is not preached *in* the church,

and only *out of* it,—a supposition literally consistent with facts in most of the parishes of this country,—on whom will lie the “blood of the souls” of its inhabitants? On them that have “not entered the kingdom only,” or on them too who have “not suffered them to enter”? On the people, or on the government? That system which first sets apart eight thousand of its ministers to point men to the wrong road, and then, by the influence it gives them, hinders others from leading them into the right one, or stamps with infamy all the preachers of the cross who are not of its sect, cannot but be regarded as a curse, and a crying abomination; and our struggles for its overthrow will cease only with success, or with the dying-away of that love which “constrains us” to view the salvation of the world as the end of the being and the continuance of the church.

8. “But their sphere of contracted influence is just such,” it will be replied, “as the tastes and the education of dissenters fit them to occupy. The clergy of the establishment must ever continue to exercise greater sway than the ministers of ‘the meeting,’ so long as knowledge and refinement are held in estimation. Your scheme of religious equality, therefore, is as ridiculous as it is in principle unjust,—it would make the very elements of power powerless, the sources of influence uninfluential.”

Now, to this reasoning we object, that dissenters do *not* occupy the position in the hearts of the people which from their piety and acquirements they deserve. The influence of the state, and the wealth of the state—both of which they are largely instrumental in creating—are wielded against them. Their name and labours are branded with the denomination of schism, revolution, infidelity, just because they cannot conscientiously profess their belief of the articles of its faith.

Besides, the assertion of the absurdity of perfect religious equality betrays the utmost perplexity of thought,—confounding the social condition of individuals with the condition given them by the political institutions of the country. We condemn the injustice of the government privilege, and it is defended on the plea that the character and acquirements of its subjects are unequal. The latter will be infinitely various in the same community; the former should be uniform and unlimited. True religious equality consists not in making men *socially* equal, but in making them, irrespective of their religious faith, *politically* equal: its sole object is to do away with all *forced* conditions, and give to every one the opportunity to exert himself, unconstrained, and in his proper sphere,—the sphere proper to his talents and worth.

But, granting that this estimate of the character and acquirements of dissenters is well-founded, granting that churchmen alone are versed in the beauties of the great writers of antiquity, what else is *their* ignorance but one of the fruits of that system of persecution of which we complain? Many years have not passed away since they were forbidden to have their children educated, except in the strictest principles of the established sect. The church, it is notorious, has usurped all the literary endowments of the country: it has taken into its own hand all the power and wealth which our fathers had bequeathed for the general diffusion of "sound learning." The means of education, and the rewards of education, are all its own; and both have been most unrighteously, but most necessarily for the continuance of the system, withheld; so that the lower the respectability and the grosser the ignorance of the dissenter, the greater has been the sin and the severer the persecutions, of the dominant church. If we have never drank at the fountains of honour and wisdom, theirs is the crime who have closed them against us.\*

9. This contraction of usefulness, with all the other

\* The merit of what education dissenters have, on the other hand, is all their own. No less a sum than fifteen or twenty thousand a year is paid by the voluntaries of this country for the education of their ministers. A large portion of it can be regarded in no other light than as a tax upon conscientious dissent.



evils of a bad name, is not the only unmerited penalty under which dissenters have suffered. Prejudices entertained against them, and originating in the antipathy of a numerous and powerful order of clergy, distributed through all the classes of society, have, at different times, been inflamed to a fearful pitch of resentment, and have ended in excesses grosser far than those committed in the days of pagan persecution. Every country of Europe has had its puritans—men bearing a close resemblance to the early Christians, against whom the malice of the populace has been directed, by the same acts of calumny and detraction, and in all instances by the same church—the endowed. Catholics, protestants, churchmen, and dissenters, have been alike guilty. Once vest them with state power, and, in self-defence, they must become “papists,” and if possible crush every opposite sect. If they have influence with the legislature, and the minds of men be “sleeping,” they impel it to persecute; or, if that expedient fail them, they try to stir up the popular mind by contrivance and management—a kind of persecution more serious, as it cripples the usefulness of the sufferers without awakening on their side the sympathies of the virtuous.

This animosity of the endowed we reckon among the *essentials* of an establishment, because its causes



are permanent. The interests of the favourite sect and the interests of the dissenter are ever opposed. That each man is *bound* to exercise his judgment in matters of religion, and to acknowledge no other *guide*,—that the emoluments of Christian ministers should be confined to the voluntary contributions of the people,—that the religion of the state is not necessarily the religion of the subject,—are maxims so obviously consistent with reason and scripture, so clearly involved in dissent, and so grossly violated by the existent system, that it cannot but be feared that “the church” will vanish before them. Under these circumstances, the worth and the devotedness of dissenters serve only (we speak of tendencies) to make them more hated, because more formidable. Had they been immoral only—papists in sentiment, atheists in practice—they might still have been regarded as the sons of the church, but now they are “worse than heathens;” their dissent is a crime that must be abandoned before it can be forgiven.

10. “But is it certain,” it may be asked, “that the overthrow of the church and the extinction of religious prerogatives would change the position or add to the usefulness of the dissenter? Wise men judge not now of names but things, and they would judge so then; they love excellence in all its forms, and under all its disguises; the fur and the er-

mine of office neither augment nor lessen their attachment."

True: power rules not the decisions of the wise; but, unhappily, if such an aphorism involve the right definition of wisdom, there will scarcely be found one wise in a million. Place and power, respectability and character, phantoms though they be, in the common estimate of them, are constantly emitting influences on all minds, the more dangerous that they are gentle, gradual, and often unfelt. If, in our inquiries after truth, our judgment were extrinsic, an attendant genius, and no part of ourselves, it might then be the dignified regulator of them; but the case is, as a most able writer has stated it, that this imperial faculty, ever dwelling in the company of more active principles than itself, is most obsequious to them all. The love of power often bribes it into acquiescence; the principle of imitation beguiles it into neglect; while these passions or tendencies themselves are modifying our actions and faith. Two things alone may make the sanctions of a government powerless—either the perfect emancipation of the mind from all passions but the passion for truth—principle; or utter contempt of government—a feeling which will certainly be generated by the continuance of the present system.

11. It will be observed, that throughout we have

looked upon establishments not so much as they are, but as they might be, if human nature were perfect, power never abused, injustice never resisted; and even under this form it has been found that they are eminently antichristian and unjust. By *patronising* one sect or opinion they *punish* another. They compel all to contribute for the maintenance of the opinions of the endowed, money and influence, while they deny to the dissenter, who believes his own faith to be the faith of the Bible, all share in them. In Italy, the penalty of dissent is proscription or imprisonment; in Spain, it is banishment or death; in England, it is loss of influence, of property,\* of character; in all, men are punished for doing as God has commanded—searching the scriptures and judging for themselves—for exercising one of the most sacred prerogatives of our nature, a prerogative which it is both impiety and injustice to invade.

12. “But these penalties,” it will be replied, “are

\* “I might have been a very respectable churchman for five guineas a year” was the observation of an eminently liberal dissenter; “my dissent costs me more than fifty times that sum.” Such instances are by no means rare; and the sums raised for various objects—missions, chapels, ministers, &c. &c.—*are enormous, though still largely inadequate*. It is a somewhat startling fact, that the Society of Friends alone pay annually no less a sum than 14,000*l.* towards the state church. The millions which dissenters pay annually would very soon fill the whole country with meetings. The poverty and debts of our places of worship are among the results of the persecutions of the church.

only the adjuncts of establishments, and not the *end* of their institution. We have no wish to inflict them, could the system be otherwise upheld. They are anomalies doubtless, ‘spots’ in our worship of love; but it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to remove them.”

The old plea of the advocates of the bitterest persecutions of pagan and catholic Rome, and one of the tritest sophisms of injustice! No one *wishes* to persecute. Penal laws against heretics were never intended to add to the revenues of the crown, or to multiply the number of criminals sentenced, but to prevent the offences against which they are directed. The question is to be determined, not according to the wishes of its advocates, but according to the actual tendencies of the system. Can government sanction one sect without branding others,—give money and influence to the endowed without denying them to the rest? This unequal treatment is, in its essence, persecution. To be just, government must withhold them from all.

13. The oft-repeated objection—that “Dissenters have certain prerogatives in their own communities with which churchmen never interfere; that none but quakers, for example, or methodists, have a voice in the general assemblies of quakers or of methodists respectively; and that these are never supposed to

involve persecution"—is nothing to the purpose. We are speaking of prerogatives created by the government at the expense of the people, and without their unanimous consent, for the exclusive benefit of a privileged sect. The decisions of a conference refer only to the acts and opinions of such as choose to acquiesce in them—the decisions of the British parliament to the acts and opinions of the British people. I am not bound to be a methodist, or to support his creed; I cannot but be a member of the state. Methodism I may revere or condemn; we are all born, it is held, within the arms of "the church."

Besides, the privileges which religious denominations unendowed confer are no more than the collective privileges of their own members, who have agreed to accumulate them by voluntary communion. The privileges of the government sect, on the other hand, are the collective privileges of the whole nation. The power and the wealth of the state is another's; the power and the wealth of the voluntary society is its own. To make the cases analagous, we must suppose a law passed, that all should be *compelled* to support methodism, and then that all should be *excluded* from its patronage and management but such as subscribed the articles of its faith. There is no persecution if there be wanting compulsion and injustice.

14. If any reply, that in the eye of the law all Englishmen are regarded as churchmen,—as true, though somewhat rebellious, subjects of the state sect,—a legal fiction not unknown in history, and revived to some purpose in certain ecclesiastical calculations of our own days;\* and that each church has a right, according to apostolic precept, to judge and punish its own members; we can only answer, by beseeching them to remember the language of the apostle—“A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, *reject* ;” and to practise the commands of our Saviour—“If they neglect to hear the church, let them be unto thee as heathen men and publicans.” If, as Christians, we must be taxed, still ought we, as heathens, to be free.†

15. “But we conscientiously advocate the con-

\* It is a very delightful fact, not generally known, that, prior to the passing of the Catholic Relief Bill, some few years ago, there were no Romanists to be found in the whole of the three kingdoms. Such is legal fiction. At present, there is scarce church accommodation for one-tenth of the inhabitants of populous cities. As Dr. Chalmers phrases it, government “can take no count of dissenters.” The state church must provide churches for all the members of the state; and for this excellent reason, as Cobbett and Chalmers both state it, that if it do not, it ceases to be “national.” Experience tells us, however, that it may do this, and still be just as little a “national” church as before.

† It is remarkable, that this argument of the Romish church should have been revived by protestants. She claims no right to punish those that do not belong to her communion. “Heathenmen” come not under her jurisdiction. Can protestants do less?



tinuance of an establishment—we believe it one of the duties of a Christian state to support religion; and therefore to overthrow the church is to violate conscience, and, on your own shewing, to ‘fight against God.’ We are conscientious compulsionists, and the dictates of our conscience are to the full as sacred as the dictates of your own.”

Now, had not history told us of the Munster fanatics, and of the fifth-monarchy men of our own country—and the “simple annals of the poor,” of some who made it a religious duty to desert their wives and families, when these would not adopt their religious tenets; had we not known that there is no limit to the aberrations even of the sincerely conscientious, we might have been tempted to question the truth of this plea. That “the Father of spirits” should sanction a system that punishes men for doing as he has bidden them—that makes the worship of Him who “loves a cheerful giver” forced service—that fills the whole land with robbery and blood, is a proposition so monstrous in itself, so derogatory to his character, and in its operation so injurious to his cause, that it is difficult to understand how men endowed with reason could have been persuaded to adopt it. But, granting that they are conscientious, is it not a principle universally allowed, that as the civil ruler has the care of the temporal welfare of the



community, he must interfere in all cases in which the persons or property of the citizens are directly and confessedly concerned? And if so, we ask the interference of the magistrate against the conscientious views of churchmen. The same principle that justified the magistrate in keeping under restraint the wild millenarians of the commonwealth, who felt themselves bound in conscience to overturn all authority, as the necessary preparation for the temporal reign of Christ, will justify him in the abrogation of all the laws on which the present iniquitous system is founded. The professed objects of both are alike inconsistent with the peace and stability of the civil power.

If it be added, in explanation, that it is not compulsion they advocate, but merely an establishment, we again answer, shew us an establishment without compulsion, and our objections cease. One thing is obvious, if religious taxes were abrogated, "conscientious" churchmen, that is, "conscientious compulsionists," could not refuse to entrust to the government one-tenth of their income for the religious instruction of the poor. "Her majesty may, doubtless, take our brother's lands, for he has offered them."

16. As ecclesiastical establishments are thus impious in punishing men for doing as God has com-

manded them, so they are injurious to the liberties of the people, the stability of the government, and the prosperity of the church.

17. Their influence on the *liberties* of the people has been most disastrous. The spiritual submission they exact prepares the way for slavish acquiescence on the encroachments of the civil power. Their ministers, “the breath of whose nostrils” is the favour of the court, are ever disposed to defend and applaud its conduct, and to make common cause with it against the claims of popular right. By flattering the ambition and favouring the dominion of the chief magistrate, they seek to promote that tyranny in the commonwealth, which otherwise it would be impossible for them to establish in the church. That under tyrannical governments dissent is almost wholly unknown—that it flourishes most in republics, where the love of liberty is extreme—that in our country the clergy have ever been the enemies of freedom—that high church is an epithet familiarly applied to arbitrary maxims of state policy—and, lastly, that one of the profoundest writers on the philosophy of history has given it, as the result of his investigations, that the establishment of catholicism can alone preserve from overthrow the semi-despotism of France,\* are

\* Guizot. That the government of Louis Philippe is despotic all allow; that the people of that country are prepared for a free

conclusive proofs of the propensity of the state clergy, and of their willingness to afford what aid they can to the interests of tyranny and oppression.

18. Their influence on the *obedience* of the people and the stability of the ruling power has been equally disastrous. They teach men that the magistrate may be lawfully resisted—for what else is the lesson of a creed professedly of divine origin, but which the subject dare not believe;—and then, by their cruelty, they drive them into rebellion. The religion of the ruler is, doubtless, in his estimation, the religion of truth; but not so in the estimation of the people. They believe him wrong, and, being bound in conscience to reject his creed, they are thus prepared to reject his laws. He compels them to dispute his illegal authority in matters of faith, and they thence learn to dispute his legal authority in matters of practice. The rebellion of the intellect against all laws but those of God and truth is too naturally transferred to the life to be easily confined within its own province. Hence it is that dissent and a love of freedom, sometimes excessive, have ever been found in union. With dissenters most of the revolutionary changes of our own country have originated; for the blessings of them *they* claim our praise; for the evils government few will affirm. The evils involved in an establishment of religion are not yet worked out of the system.

connected with them we are indebted to that system which, by endowing one of the religious sects, had made rebels in faith of the rest. They who legislate for Ireland may speak as they please of agitators and agitation; there is no peace for that country till all state ecclesiastical endowments are withdrawn.

And while state churches are thus active in teaching the people the practice of rebellion, they drive them to it by their injustice. Exposed to pains and penalties—compelled to support a religion which their conscience condemns—proscribed by the spirit and tendency of the system—crippled in their influence and usefulness as Christians, dissenters must be more than men if they feel no resentment, or are passionately devoted to the ruling powers. To expect affection for injury, gratitude for mere sufferance, where equality is their due, is for the advocates of the system to look for a harvest where they have never sown. The best of men have preferred liberty to oppression, and have been more anxious to attain the ends of good government than to stickle about its forms. Dissenters agree with them; and though they hold a government like ours, consisting of *three* simple elements, best fitted to give order and stability to popular freedom, they are too much its friends to flatter its corruptions or defend its injustice. They seek the disunion of state and church—that *fourth*

element unknown in the theory of our constitution—lest both should be overthrown: the one must fall: their hope is that the other may be preserved.\*

It would be easy to illustrate these, the tendencies of establishments, by a reference to analagous cases unconnected with religion. Suppose men were distinguished in civil life by their tastes, or by their complexion; suppose a government were to issue a law, stating expressly that opium is wholesome, and enjoining that all who refused to use it in a certain form, and at certain times, should be prohibited the same privileges as other citizens; that, whatever the cause of their refusal, whether want of relish for the government-gum, or a persuasion of its injurious effects on their peculiar constitution, they should be excluded from all share in some millions of money raised from the *whole* people for the exclusive benefit of the obedient—refused the benefits of education, they and their children—branded in social life, and shunned by all who affected the character of respectability or virtue. Would these outcasts be the more likely to obey the laws after this specimen of medical wisdom and of justice on the part of the government? Would it be safe to leave in their hands the little

\* It will be remembered, that the Reformation not only overturned churches, but often, as in Scotland, states too, for attempting to support them.

knowledge, or money, or influence, which, in spite of such treatment, they had succeeded in acquiring? Or could it be a matter of just surprise, if they seized the first opportunity of asserting their rights, and of forcibly maintaining them? In all states, "the great agitator" is oppression.

It is owing to this tendency of injustice that most magistrates have judged it necessary—and they have certainly judged *wisely*—to place under restriction the members of every other church but their own; they have taken it as granted that, till human nature is changed, men will ever struggle to shake off the yoke that galls them; and that, as they are unwilling to remove the cause, they must at least take away the power of resistance. Toleration, unless government be prepared to allow voluntarism and religious equality, is, in truth, a dangerous experiment—an anomaly, which neither history nor philosophy can be induced to approve. We are trying now in matters of religion what has long since been tried in matters of civil liberty in France. The analogy is complete, though, we hope, not ominous. In that country, the people acquired knowledge, and, naturally enough, demanded rights which had been taken from them while men "slept." The king denied them, but neglected to remove from the people their power. Either they ought not to have been raised



by knowledge to the rank of men, or they ought to have received the rights of citizens. So in our own: government allows the people to imbibe the principles of dissent, and contents itself with stigmatizing dissenters. Either dissent should be wholly proscribed, or state patronage should cease: they are as certainly opposed as knowledge and despotism. Spain is, in this respect, wiser than England, and to the full as just.\*

19. In spite of these obvious facts, however, there are not wanting those who assert that establishments are essential to the peace and continuance of government,—an assertion that betrays the utmost indistinctness of thought, confounding religion and state-establishments of religion; and one which is moreover as

\* It is with great pleasure I quote a somewhat similar thought from a work which has not yet received, in this country, the attention it deserves:—"It is criminal in the state to license opinions and practices which it is entitled to denounce and suppress, as sinful and hurtful. That nation participates in the guilt of the heretic which, having a right to exclude him, permits him to harbour within its boundaries, and taint the air with a moral pestilence, which may work to the dissolution of the whole body of discipline. As the priest should cast him out of the church, so the civil ruler, charged as he also is to keep religion pure, should expel him from the soil. No safety from error and guilt in exercising the tremendous office of preserving religious truth among the people is to be found, except in a policy which knows no compromise with falsehood. Nor is there wanting, it must be confessed, abundant occasion to resume this policy, and rouse all the sleeping terrors of the law. The insults dissenters are continually offering to the religion of the state



inconsistent with the conclusions of common sense as with the lessons of experience.

With the conclusions of *common sense* it is altogether inconsistent. If it be true that the church supports the civil power, because it has the civil ruler for its friend, would it not be equally true, that the several congregations of dissenters, if he were *their* friend, would find it their interest to become guardians of the public peace, enemies of all useless change, from the persuasion that none could improve their condition or add to their usefulness? If the church, because kindly treated by the state, contributes largely to the support of the government, how much greater would be its security, if all good subjects, treated with equal kindness, and without any distinction on account of religion, were thus made its common support,—a con-

are undisguised and flagrant,—are such as would not be tolerated in any other department of government. They make an open boast of their disloyalty, and with unremitting and organized hostility are assailing the religious branch of the constitution. Let them, then, be repressed by the same weapons which ensures their obedience to civil laws. Nor let it be said, that a persecution would strengthen their animosity and increase their numbers. These are its consequences only when it is conducted feebly, and by wavering counsels. A vigorous persecution suppressed protestantism in Italy; it suppressed it in Spain; and went near to extinguish it in France; and over any faith, in any quarter of the globe, those rulers will undoubtedly triumph who are ready for an unscrupulous profusion of treasure and blood.”—Dick, on *Church Polity*, p. 22. It is hard to tell how a consistent advocate of establishments can answer these statements.

summation that would certainly be attained, if the laws were a "terror only to evil *doers*," and a "praise" to none but to "them that *do* well." If a government be against its subject, it must be expected that the subject will be against the government.

With universal *experience* this opinion is equally inconsistent. It is notorious, that the violation of the principles of toleration, or rather of full religious equality, has caused more wars and shed more blood than diversity of opinion, ambition of secular princes, studied devotion to the balance of power, and all other pleas which ingenious sophistry has ever urged in defence of murder and injustice. If this assertion be founded in truth, then is the whole of history one vast lie. The continuance of the four great kingdoms; the revolutions of the empire of the Constantines; the revolts of Germany; the wars of the popes; the sufferings and forced rebellion of Covenanters, Puritans, Huguenots, Waldenses, and protestant Hollanders; the tragical scenes of the thirty years' war; the victories of Gustavus; the execution of the (so called) martyred Charles; the deposition of Cromwell; the banishment of the popish James; the expulsion of the Bourbons; the conquests of Napoleon; all the darkest stories of history are black with falsehood only, and not with blood, if establishments of religion secure the peace and prosperity of the ruling

power. Till this character be justly assigned them, or till it be shewn that unsanctified human nature may be deeply injured without provoking a desire of relief or revenge, we fearlessly assert, that INJUSTICE IS NEVER SAFE ; and that all states expecting peace from the endowment of one set of opinions, whatever they be, are, in truth, trusting in a broken reed, which will ultimately pierce the hand that holds it.\* They that share in the sin of the people of Judah will certainly share, sooner or later, in their punishment.

20. We come now to investigate the influence of the system upon the *unity*, the *spirituality*, and the *prosperity* of the church ; and in prosecuting this investigation, it is intended to leave unnoticed the canons of establishments,—all of them founded on the assumption of ecclesiastical power,—whatever evils may be supposed consequent upon that spirit of exclusiveness which they are certain to engender in the minds of their members, and all the thousand sources of jealousy and animosity which they are likely to open and supply for the overwhelming of the common peace. We shall dwell solely upon what is confessedly involved in the system itself,—the endowment of opinions and practices not absolutely fundamental, state patronage, and proscription. Of all sects, the endowed, it will be seen, has ever been the

\* Isaiah, xxxvi. 6.

most secular, the least charitable, and, in the promotion of spiritual religion, the least adapted for permanent success.

By “fundamental truths” is meant, such truths as must be “believed by all who would be saved,”—truths which, once heartily embraced, stamp upon the Christian a new image, and translate him into a new kingdom. Their number, or their relative position, it is no business of ours to determine. It may merely be stated, as the belief of most dissenters, that they are summed up in the one grand doctrine of the New Testament,—justification, on the exercise of faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Christ,—a doctrine which seems to them to involve the divinity of the Saviour, and the necessity of the renewal and the sanctification of the spirit. But whatever they be, thus much will be universally allowed,—that no state has endowed fundamental truths *only*; but with them opinions and practices of secondary importance. A man may be saved who does *not* believe them. Three-fourths, probably, of the articles or practices of existent establishments may be rejected by some who, after all, are true Christians; in other words, state establishments, in all countries, where any modification of Christian doctrine is endowed, shut men out of the visible church for opinions and practices which will never be the cause of their exclusion from heaven.

They have thus, by their contracted and arbitrary limits of communion, forced Christians beyond "the pale;" and justified, by their example, the like narrowness against themselves on the part of dissentient sects. Whatever the sin and evils of schism be, it is certain that they lie most heavily at the door of those churches that have ever been thus anxious to establish moot points and impositions in divinity which all allow to be "not necessary to salvation."

The grave charge, then, which we urge against the system is this: that by deifying its own interpretations of scripture, even in matters of polity, discipline, and outward worship, and enforcing them upon all its members, it has created innumerable divisions, and done all that in it lies to make them immortal; thus rending not the garment only, but the very body of Christ, to the scandal of the infidel and the impenitent, and to the prejudice of the truth. The blood shed in mortal combat over the numerous holes of Calvary, in each of which the cross is supposed by rival sects to have been fixed, is not a more scandalous abomination than are the "authorized" schisms of the church; and as we have never heard of establishments that allowed in non-essentials liberty and charity, without which these breaches can never be healed, or hope to hear of them, we seek to overturn them, as the first step towards that union which we

expect to see realized at no distant day. The great schismatic has ever been, and will ever be, the system which allows none to be members of the church,—that is, in effect, true Christians,—but such as profess to believe in opinions and practices which all deny to be essentials of the faith.

“ But, if the articles to which you object are thus trivial and insignificant, if we *all* know what are the blessings of the ‘common salvation,’ why is it that you dissenters keep aloof from the church? Why complain of injustice and persecution, when, on all vital topics, you are altogether at one with ourselves? You ask,—why are we not taken in? We ask in return,—why do you keep yourselves out?” The schisms of the church and the sufferings of dissenters are all of them owing, it is concluded, to their own want of charity and intelligence.

Never was answer, sanctioned by so high authority, more absurd or fallacious.\* Even if dissenters differed from their brethren of the establishment on points of doctrine or of practice only, and not on the question of compulsory support, union on such principles were still utterly impracticable. It is forgotten that such points have ceased to be *minor* the moment

\* Dr. Chalmers’ Lectures, p. 175. His statement was received by his audience with *ironical* cheers, but given by himself, as we have good reason to know, in all seriousness.



they become tests of Christian fellowship. The practice of infant baptism, for example, involves no fundamental truth; he who allows and he who denies its obligation may both of them be true Christians, and I may have communion with both. A belief of the scripture origin of adult immersion, if such be my view of divine truth, may never interrupt the harmony of our intercourse, or disturb the exercise of that family affection which is so consistent with the genius and spirit of the gospel; but if I be told, that I cannot be a minister of your church unless I profess my belief in the opposite doctrine, and hold that "infant baptism is most agreeable with the institution of Christ," or a member of it unless I have been baptized according to its rubric of directions, the little *point* expands into a line of separation, as impassable as would be the profession of a belief in the doctrines—"if doctrines they may be called, where doctrines there are none"—of atheism itself. I can as easily "say in my heart,—No God," as adopt such practices, or sign the articles that approve them. All tests become essentials, when subscription is required as necessary to communion; and I can no more sign *as true* the most trivial, which I disbelieve, than the most momentous. If a man act according to his own persuasion, it is hard to tell by how little faith he may be saved; for him that acts against it there is no



hope,—he is most certainly condemned.\* The duty of Christians, therefore, is obvious,—they must “each be persuaded in his own mind;” and the duty of the church is consistent,—it must receive “the weak” as *they are*, not proscribe or exclude them till they become perfectly matured.

Nor is the system better fitted to secure unity of faith in the essentials of the gospel; for, besides that men are the more exposed to be led into error by it than into truth, as national religions are more of them false or erroneous than such as have God for their author, it is certain that, as unity is the result of an impartial investigation of evidence, it can never be promoted by discountenance and punishment on one side of a question, with honour a preferment on the other. Establishments are mostly bribes on the profession of error; and if by chance they be bribes on the profession of truth, they are still as little likely to add to the number of its *hearty* supporters. It is a melancholy illustration of the soundness of this reasoning, that in all existent establishments there is the most perfect oneness of profession with the least possible oneness of faith.†

Besides, the endowment of fundamental truths begets in the minds of most men a prejudice against these truths themselves, even whilst they are not un-

\* Rom. xiv. 23.

† See note F.

willing to share in the prerogatives connected with the profession of them. The religion that needs the aid of the secular power they learn to regard as false and detestable, or, at best, as suspicious; whilst indifferent spectators will ever judge most favourably of the creed of those that reject it, and who, they feel persuaded, would never expose themselves to the evils and ignominy of dissent if they were not thoroughly convinced of the justice of their cause. It has thus ever been the misfortune of the establishment to reckon among its advocates the interested and the heartless, and to awaken on the side of its opponents the suspicions and sympathies of the generous and the thoughtful. It may have clothed men in the livery of truth, but it has taught others, by its very bounty, to suspect whether it has ever made them its true friends. Whatever is injurious to our persuasion of the sincerity of another, is so far injurious to the interests of Christian love.

Further, so long as the present system is allowed, the church of Christ must continue divided. Either the voluntary principle must be abandoned, or ecclesiastical establishments must cease. The creed of the churchman is—that the magistrate ought to compel all the subjects of the empire to diffuse what he himself believes to be true; the voluntary holds, that the truth should be diffused *only* by the free-will offerings

of its disciples. The one denies not the lawfulness of the *practice* of voluntaryism, and therefore may be a member of a voluntary community; the other altogether denies the lawfulness or justice of compulsion in matters of faith, and therefore can never consistently support a system which is professedly founded upon it. If, therefore, it be a wished-for blessing that the church of Christ should be visibly one, that all coldness, and divisions, and *heartless* union, should cease, the only scheme that can realize our prayer is that which proposes the abolition of the present system, to which a large proportion of the Christians of this country are conscientiously opposed, and the universal establishment of that system which, however some may fancy inefficient in practice, all acknowledge to be in principle eminently consistent with the example and precepts of primitive times. A churchman may become a member of a congregation that pays its own minister, and defrays its own expenses; a voluntary can never consistently become a member of the state church, else he must sanction by his presence what his principles condemn. Whether a voluntary can be a Christian, and whether with voluntaries churchmen ought to hold any Christian communion, are doubtless questions that admit of dispute; but there can be no question, if these be answered affirmatively, that no union can be perma-

ment which implies an admission of the right of one Christian to impose his creed upon another. Were our own sect established, we should immediately leave its fellowship, in the persuasion that it is most impious to deny to all, save to them that think and act with us, the same liberty of thinking and acting which we claim in justice for ourselves. Dissenters wage a war of extermination against everything in the form of compulsory support. Till the alleged right of imposition of faith be withdrawn, our union can never be complete.

It is this practice of compulsion in state churches which makes it hopeless that Christian love, or "unity of faith" itself, can ever make Christians visibly one, so long as they are continued. "Charity and intelligence" may doubtless do much towards changing the system, but till it be changed they can do little towards promoting our union, and scarcely more towards promoting our peace. They may give meekness to our faith, and candour to our judgment, but they can never alter or annihilate them. They teach us—to wish men well, not necessarily to think men right,—to give up for the interests of the truth our privilege, but to maintain inviolate our principles. To uphold a system which is daily inflaming the passions of men against the gospel,—awakening their sympathies on the side of error,—interfering with the

liberty of the subject, and thus aiding rebellion,—throwing scandals into the path of the infidel,—making the church a “lodging-place” for the “fowls of heaven,”—changing “the house of prayer” *for all nations* “into a den of thieves,”—literally, destroying more souls in eight thousand of its parishes than it saves in the other two,—were no charity, unless it be charity to extend and perpetuate the “kingdom of darkness,” and to hinder the progress of the “kingdom of God.” They that speak so often of the power of this principle, which is, doubtless, in its place omnipotent, forget that in the question of communion its only office is to induce the church to admit into its fellowship such Christians as the ignorance or prejudice of a by-gone age had excluded, not to persuade the excluded to sign or allow the tests of the church. Its office is to abolish the tests, not to confirm them; to do away with all admission of the propriety of compulsion in matters of faith, not to bribe dissenters into sinful acquiescence.

And while the system divides the church by its unscriptural tests,—amongst which is an admission of the rightness of persecution,—and by its gross bribery on behalf of error or truth, it is equally injurious to that *unity of heart* which, even more, perhaps, than unity of faith, is so essential to the prosperity of our common cause. They that will sit in

the place of power and dignity in Christ's kingdom are sure to "move the indignation" of their brethren; and therefore it is decided, that no one shall "exercise dominion" in the church but its Ruler and Head.\*

21. The next grave charge which we urge against this system is, that as the creed and patronage of the established sect are both of them under the control of the civil ruler, it is eminently injurious to the *spirituality* of the church.

The *creed* of the establishment is the creature of the governing powers, and they may change or modify it as they please. Whatever articles they condemn they have a right to remove; whatever others they believe they have a right to introduce;† and not only have they a right to make such changes, but they ought to make them if they believe them well founded. A Socinian government is as much bound, if the principle of an establishment be admitted, to establish Socinianism; a Romish govern-

\* Matt. xx. 24. Dr. Chalmers suggests, that more charity is all that is wanted to secure the unity of Christians—a remedy quite applicable to dissenters, but useless if intended to promote their union with the advocates of compulsion. Christ removed the "indignation of his disciples" by forbidding all ecclesiastical assumption, not by inculcating love. Besides, principle is involved in this question. To sanction by our practice state churches, or passively to allow them, is not charity, but sin.

† Note G.



ment Romanism, and a disciple of Zerdusht the doctrines of his master, as a protestant Christian government protestantism; not because these creeds are indifferent, but because each government is bound to act consistently with its own conscience. There may, indeed, be a question on the duty of the establishment, whether it ought to admit the change, or whether it ought not rather to give up at once its privilege and dependence; but there can be no question—or if there be a question, history and facts decide it—on the duty and powers of the state. All that receive its wealth must be prepared to receive its laws.

If it be answered,—“that the origin of all government is with the people,—that no changes can be introduced but such as they approve,—and that, therefore, the good sense of the nation is the guardian of the truth,” still the creed of the church is not less the creature of the state: it may be modified as before, according to the taste, and *ought* to be modified according to the belief, of the ruling power or of the nation; and whether nations and states “judge after the flesh or after the Spirit,” history and common experience will easily decide.

“The religion of the state *ought* to be such as the rulers or the people believe.” No, say the advocates of establishments, “it ought to be the religion of the



Bible." Be it so; but who is judge of its meaning, the Socinian or the orthodox?—the church as by law established, or the sects as by law proscribed?—the aristocracy, or the "masses" of Birmingham and Glasgow? Unless it can be shewn that it is the duty of a nation to diffuse what they think false, either opinions and religion must be left untouched by the government, or it must diffuse what the people most generally believe. If the latter side of the alternative be adopted, the question recurs, Is the creed of the government, or of the people, likely to be the creed of the Bible?—and history decides it, by reminding us that the governors of this country have changed its faith, though not its ministers, six times during the last three centuries, and that most of the corruptions of Romanism were forced into the system by the influence of the people and the subserviency of the "rulers" of the church.\* If there must be a state religion, it will ever be, and it ought to be, the religion of the most influential—that is, as all states now are, the religion of human nature; and therefore Christians must either deny the propriety of government interference in questions of religious faith, or they must be contented to advocate a principle which, if allowed, may be pleaded with equal justice in defence of legalism in England, of Romanism in

\* See note II.

Ireland, and of every system of idolatry throughout the globe.

If it be answered, that the government ought to diffuse the religion of the Bible, we again ask, who is judge of its meaning? and whether any government is bound to diffuse what it believes to be false? If not, the religion of the state will still be the religion of the governors, or of the people, and therefore liable to be modified and changed by whatever influences act upon the popular mind.

The objection that the creed of dissenters and of the dissenting clergy is exposed to the same influences is utterly unfounded. The creeds of dissenting churches can be changed by none but by professed Christians, who have been instructed in the truths of the Bible, and have professed their belief in those of them that are fundamental. The creed of the state church, by parties of all shades of religious belief, or by parties of no religious belief at all, and, as the reasonings of one of the most learned of the bishops\* prove, may be set aside to-morrow for the creed of the

\* Bishop Blomfield, in his last visitation address to the clergy of his diocese. Certain funds had been applied to certain purposes, and certain offices had been abolished, under the persuasion that "these changes would be approved by the majority of the people." "*Vox populi, vox Dei*," is clearly the bishop's creed; and if the state *must* endow a system of religious worship or belief, it is, doubtless, a sound one.

Romanist or of the infidel. The only safeguard of established creeds, when false, is the excess of the influence of self-interest above the influence of truth; and when true, is the excess of the piety of each age above its wickedness. The safeguard of dissenting creeds is the succession of *pious* men—members of their churches—who alone can change them. These may be modified only by Christians; those, by the people or the state.

And whilst the creed of the state church is thus under the permanent influence of popular prejudice and popular opinions; the church itself is fearfully secularized by the ever-changing, but not less injurious, influences of state-*patronage*. Its highest trusts and holiest functions are prostituted, without compunction, to the grossest objects of personal or party aggrandisement. The temple of God is made a house of merchandize, its offices and vessels sold, as all admit, for the promotion of the purposes of political sects.

Whether this evil be an essential of the system is a question easily decided; for, in the *first* place, if it be supposed that not the government, but the people, be invested with the powers of patronage, they are no more fitted to exercise them than the state. The choice of dissenting clergy is confined to members of dissenting churches—persons of undoubted piety; the

choice of the established clergy would then be extended, as it ought, to all who are compelled to support them; and the preference of the common prejudices of human nature would be found to the full as unsafe as the preferences of politics. Such an investment of patronage would, doubtless, be consistent with justice, but by no means with the maintenance of spiritual religion. That system is the only sound one which is consistent with both.

There is, *secondly*, no hope that any government will abandon its patronage, either in favour of the clergy or of the people, so long as its grants are continued; nor would it be wise, on any principle of worldly prudence, that it should be abandoned. That institutions supported by a state should be more or less under its management, and accountable to its tribunals, is a constitutional principle of all well-regulated governments, never violated without hazard of the worst results. The turbulence of the Greek clergy whilst independent of the eastern emperors, and in our own times the seditious practices of the Jesuits, prove that ecclesiastical institutions form no exception to this universal rule; and have for ever set at rest all dispute on the danger of permitting in any country the existence of a vast corporation independent of the civil power, and ever prone either to tyranny or to rebellion, as the government is favourable or adverse to its un-

righteous and usurped claims. The chain that is suspended from the throne, and made the medium of conveying amongst the people the most influential of all impressions, must be subject to the touch of him that fills it, and had better be destroyed than entrusted to other hands. "The people of England," to adopt, with some modification, the language of Burke, "have trembled for their liberty, from the influence of a clergy dependent on the crown; they tremble for the public tranquillity, from the disorders of a factious clergy, if it were made to depend upon any other than the crown. They would, therefore, make their church, like their king and nobility, independent."\*

These, then, are the positions which the advocates of the system must be contented to occupy; they must either hold that state patronage should continue,—that is, that Christianity should remain political, secular and feeble,—or, that the patronage should be given up to the clergy, who will certainly,—not as priests, but as men,—seek to enslave the people, or to overturn the government; or that it should be extended to all who contribute towards the ecclesiastical tax; in which case, popular prejudice, and the unhallowed tendencies of human nature, will fill the pulpits of the church. Secularized religion, or tyranny and revolution; the adaptation of the gospel to the

\* Reflections on the Revolution in France.

tastes of the corrupt heart, or injustice; these are respectively the dilemmas of each scheme of patronage which state endowments allow.\* The only safe, the only just, the only consistent one is that which leaves the choice and the support of their ministers to the piety and prudence of Christians themselves.

Another fearful evil connected with the patronage

\* No one has stated more beautifully (his secular estimate of religion apart) than Adam Smith the evils of entrusting the patronage of the church either with the government or with the people:—"The followers of Luther, together with what is called the church of England, preserved more or less of the episcopal government, established subordination among the clergy, gave the sovereign the disposal of all bishoprics and other consistorial benefices within his dominions, and thereby rendered him the real head of the church. . . . Under such a government, the clergy naturally endeavour to recommend themselves to the sovereign, to the court, and to the nobility and gentry of the country, by whose influence they chiefly expect to obtain preferment. They pay court to those patrons, sometimes, no doubt, by the vilest flattery and assentation, but frequently, too, by cultivating all those arts which best deserve, and which are therefore most likely to gain them, the esteem of people of rank and fortune; by their knowledge in all the different branches of useful and ornamental learning; by the decent liberality of their manners; by the social good humour of their conversation; and by their avowed contempt of those absurd and hypocritical austerities which fanatics inculcate and pretend to practise, in order to draw upon themselves the veneration, and upon the greater part of men of rank and fortune, who avow that they do not practise them, the abhorrence, of the common people. Such a clergy, however, while they pay their court in this manner to the higher ranks of life, are very apt to neglect altogether the means of maintaining their influence and authority with the lower. They are listened to, esteemed, and respected by their superiors; but before their inferiors they are frequently incapable of defending effectually, and to the conviction



of establishments is, that they tend to secularize the minds of the ministers of religion, by making them careless of the moral support of their people; they are not only promoted for secular services, but altogether independent of the spiritual well-being of their charge. A dissenter is honoured and supported in proportion to the purity and uprightness of his character, to the usefulness of his preaching, to the suc-

of such hearers, their own sober and moderate doctrines against the most ignorant enthusiast who chooses to attack them.

“The followers of Calvin, on the contrary, bestowed upon the people of each parish, whenever the church became vacant, the right of electing their own pastor, and established at the same time the most perfect equality among the clergy. The former part of this institution, as long as it remained in vigour, seems to have been productive of nothing but disorder and confusion, and to have tended equally to corrupt the morals both of the clergy and of the people. . . . So small a matter as the appointment of a parish-priest occasioned almost always a violent contest, not only in one parish, but in all the neighbouring parishes, who seldom failed to take part in the quarrel. In cities, and in small republics, every paltry dispute of this kind, over and above exasperating the animosity of all their other factions, threatened to leave behind it both a new schism in the church and a new faction in the state; so that at length the magistrate found it necessary, for the sake of preserving the public peace, to assume to himself the right of presenting to all vacant benefices.” In Scotland, the act of William III., which established presbytery, put it in the power of certain classes of people in each parish to purchase, for a very small price, the right of electing their own pastor. This right, owing to the disorders it occasioned, was withdrawn in the reign of Anne, but afterwards renewed.—*Wealth of Nations*, book v. chap. 1.

Dissenters hold that, under a right system, the election of pastors is the business, neither of the government nor of the parish, but solely of the Christian church.



cess of his ministry: the promotion of a clergyman is dependent on the power of his friends, the cleverness of his political pamphlets, or, at best, on his fame for ability and learning. In consequence, the precious learning of the heart has ever been despised. Movements of piety have rather been suspected and discountenanced than cherished and explained; or, when they have been more kindly regarded, it has been because they add to the popularity of the church, not because they are eminently consistent with the genius of the gospel. Spiritual energy is essential to the continuance of spiritual life; but this energy the church can never need, for the nation is her own; and as for others, it is against her principles to unsettle their faith. She thinks not of the piety of the people, so long as the temporal fruits of piety are ever found, she cares not how, upon her altars.\* They that pay no tithes, know no "church," revere no priests, acknowledge no earthly spiritual head, she is heartily ready to pity and despise; but if they pay, it

\* So notorious is this fact, that one of the most philosophic historians this country has ever known, and one who was no enemy to existent institutions, has expressly reckoned the indolence of the state clergy among the advantages of a state church. "It will be found," says he, "that the most decent and advantageous composition which the civil magistrate can make with the spiritual guides of the people is, to bribe their indolence by assigning stated salaries to their profession, and rendering it superfluous for them to be further active than merely to prevent their flock from straying in quest of new

is a matter with her of secondary moment whether they have ever believed, excepting so far as the sincerity of their faith is likely to affect the regularity of their payments, and the continuance of their devotedness and submission. It is a conclusive proof of the correctness of these statements,—that the champions of high-church orthodoxy have ever been the opponents of evangelical sentiment,—that very many of the evangelical ministers of the establishment have been supported on the voluntary system, not on the system of compulsion,—that they are in all establishments a lamentable minority, and—that the times of temporal adversity have ever been with them, as in Ireland, times of spiritual revival. The less their dependence upon the state, the deeper their devotedness to the highest interests of the people, and the greater their success. The best days of the established church will be the first days of her disunion, when she has just ceased to be established. The accession of piety she will then gain, by the inde-

pastors." See the whole passage quoted in the early part of the fifth book of the "Wealth of Nations." Dr. Smith has shewn that, both in catholic and in protestant countries, the independent dignitaries of the church, though generally careful to maintain the necessary discipline over their inferiors, have seldom given themselves any trouble about the instruction of the people. Religion has always been most effectually diffused in the one by the poorer parochial clergy and the ministers of proprietary chapels, and in the other by the mendicant orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis.

pendence of her ministers, and the spirituality of her people, will be as "life from the dead." Numbers will return to her communion, and all denominations, placed on perfect equality, each possessed of the power of advancing towards her, and of admitting her approach, will regard her as their "sister in Christ." The spirit of peace, of unity, of love, will be revived; the divided church will become one; and then will be completed the triumph of the truth, for "God will command the blessing;"\* and Christ will reign, not in name only, as now, in the councils of a government, but in the *hearts* of the people. The cessation of establishments will be, in our estimation, one of the least equivocal indications of the dawn of that day which is to witness the universal diffusion of the gospel, when "the Lord will be glorified in the church," and "*gifts* of gold and incense come up with acceptance upon his altar," because "brought" willingly by such as present them. "Her inspectors shall be peace, her exactors righteousness; *violence* shall no more be heard in her land, destruction and calamity in her borders; but her walls shall be called salvation, and her gates praise."†

In this want of moral support have originated many

\* Psalm cxxxiii. 3. "There, God commanded the blessing:" Energy, happiness, ("life,") and unity, are under the gospel indissoluble.

† Isaiah, lx. 16—18. Lowth.

of the doctrines of Romanism, and not a few of the corruptions which are now threatening the very existence of the truth. While the Bible was unknown, the priests of the established sects, often, doubtless, with what may be deemed the best intentions, adapted the creed of the church, first in minor points, but afterwards in points of more moment, to the popular taste, and by every possible means sought to interweave with the system the prejudices and the feelings of the people. They denounced damnation against all who denied their authority, and promised heaven to the obedient; for the scrupulous they invented auricular confession; for the "feeble-minded," the decisions of tradition and of the church; for the "faithless and the unprofitable," the nicely-weighed punishments of purgatory; for the worldly, the immunities of indulgence; for the irreligious, the vendible benefits of priestly sanctity and faith. Mahammad himself they were ready to acknowledge for acknowledging Christ; while they changed the doctrines of the Bible for the doctrines of Confutsee that they might reckon *his* disciples among their own. In a word, the true religion, because established, has given to all other systems, by its union with them, somewhat of its own immortality, in the hope that its priests and temples might share in the authority and rewards of endowed sects. Whatever it has thus

lost in spirituality it has tried to gain by conforming to popular prejudice and popular fears. Whether such conformity and such appeals are likely to strengthen the *heartly* attachment of men to the truth is a serious question, but a question which it is needless to discuss, till it be shewn that they are less likely to be adapted to the *corrupt* passions of men than to the spirit and requirements of the gospel.

One most obvious illustration of this tendency on the part of established sects to foster erroneous impressions of religion is seen in the almost universal belief that some of its duties are vicarious,—duties which a government is bound to discharge for its subjects. Such is the study of the sacred writings and the diffusion of them. If it be true that a government may prescribe what the people ought to be taught, then it may prescribe what they ought to believe; and if so, of what possible use is the reading of the Bible? Every man is a member of the establishment, whatever his faith, who *does* as the church has enjoined, and abstains from what is forbidden. The precept addressed to all is, “Hear the church;” and the uniform reply, in argument, “Such is the opinion of the church:” a precept and a reply eminently consistent with the prevalent disposition of human nature,\* but wholly repugnant to the prin-

\* See Whately’s “Errors of Romanism,” c. ii. s. 9.

ciples of protestant Christians. Besides, they teach that Christian activity is rather the duty of the government than of the church. Proprietary chapels, home-missionary labours, all the mechanism of Christian benevolence, are confessedly anomalies in the system; they are, literally, as a recent case in Ireland has shewn, illegal: Christians are forbidden to support them. And even if this were not the canon of the church, the fact that it is the duty of the government to provide religious instruction, and church accommodation, for the whole of the people, clearly implies that it is not the *duty* of private Christians to provide them. In perfect consistency with these statements, it is found that the high-church party—in whom the tendencies of the establishment are embodied—have ever been the opponents of missions, both at home and abroad; partly, probably, because unsanctioned by those in power, and partly, through fear of their influence on the popular mind and on the continuance of the system,—a fear from which we cannot profess to be wholly free, being somewhat suspicious that Christian devotedness and dissent,—a kind heart and a liberal mind,—are too closely connected to admit of independent cultivation. Establishments seem framed, in fact, for quieting the consciences of men at the least possible expense of personal piety and personal exertion. With the listlessness and cor-



ruptions of the church they originated, and on the return of its vitality and devotedness they will for ever cease.

22. Nor has the tendency of them been injurious to vital piety only,—to the spirituality of the creeds of state churches,—to the diffusion of evangelical sentiments amongst their ministers,—to the study of the Bible,—and to the personal responsibility of Christian effort; they have been equally injurious, by their contempt of certain well-known laws of evidence, to the progress of truth,—to the general *success* of the gospel. By awakening in the mind a suspicion of the insincerity of the pious, and by discountenancing and punishing every opposite system, they weaken, most materially, the evidence in favour of the religion so supported, and in the end inflict more injury on all religionists than government influence and government wealth can ever remove; so that even where the fundamental truths of the Bible have been established, the establishment of them has made more infidels than Christians.

It is notorious that, in all countries, the belief of men is confirmed by the faith of their neighbours. Hence, the blood of the martyrs has ever been the seed of the church. *Their* persuasion of the truth of the gospel has awakened a kindred persuasion in the minds of thousands whom no reasoning could ever



have convinced, no appeals have moved. Multitudes have been "baptized" into the ranks of the church, "in the place of the dead," on witnessing the power of religion in imparting comfort which, in such circumstances, no other creed could have given. Hence, too, the influence of consistency—which is faith in practice, as martyrdom is faith in suffering—on the advancement of truth. Men see its tendency, and they themselves believe; and such will continue the experience of the church so long as the feelings of religion are diffused less by argument than by a sort of moral contagion, from heart to heart. Now, in establishments this power of sympathy and of holiness is lost, because the honours and emoluments of profession leave it doubtful whether their members are sincere. That the influence of the state is of secondary moment when compared with this influence of unhired consistency is certain, from the fact that the suspicion of "men's being paid for it" has almost annihilated belief in Christianity among all classes throughout a great portion of continental Europe.

Even among persons of the first intelligence,—who are, perhaps, a little less dependent for the constancy of their faith upon the sympathetic faith of their brethren,—infidelity is fearfully prevalent, and its prevalence is attributable to a similar cause. They admit the truth of the gospel, if at all, because in

every age it has challenged refutation, and defied it. Few men, however learned, have gone through the whole proof. They have believed what is not disproved, because they know that there are those abroad who are doing their utmost to disprove it. Scepticism, infidelity, dissent, form the very groundwork of their faith; and so long as these modifications of sentiment, or negations of sentiment, are unfettered by the civil power, they continue to believe. But by state churches this defiance of contradiction is discouraged.\* No one may question the truth of the established system but on pain of disgrace, of contracted usefulness, sometimes of more flagrant, though never more serious, punishment. In consequence, the faith of men, which rests for the most part on the conviction that if there were any flaw in the evidence it would be detected, is weakened. They may not, at first, deny the statements of the witness; but it certainly *is* suspicious that all cross-examination is forbidden. They thus secretly question, then ridicule, and ultimately, though still covertly, disbelieve. The souls of the majority of *professing* Christians, learned and rude, throughout Europe, is thus the price which, age after age, Christianity has been compelled to pay for the continuance of the state church.

See Whately's "Errors of Romanism," chap. v. The arguments of the whole book apply with equal force to *endowed* protestantism.

23. In spite of these ruinous tendencies, however, establishments have found, even among the disinterested, not a few warm supporters, who, influenced in some cases by a superstitious reverence for whatever is sanctioned by those in power, and in others by a zealous, but ill-judged, desire of diffusing truth by *all* means, are ever ready to give their voice in favour of their continuance. It is intended to examine briefly the arguments by which the opinions of these estimable, but, as we hold, mistaken persons, are supported.

24. The first class to whom we refer are the peaceful; whose favourite passage is the prophet's description of the Messiah—"He shall not cry aloud, nor cause his voice to be heard in the public place;" and their favourite precept—"Keep the unity of the spirit, in the exercise of that peace which alone can bind together the church." Whatever bears the semblance of strife or rebellion they hold in absolute abhorrence.

Now, this plea, we humbly apprehend, is founded in mistake. Voluntaries are not defending insubordination or disunion, but only decrying ecclesiastical establishments. They do not assert that the one is right, only that the other are wrong. They are not asking men to rebel; they only wish them to remove all cause of rebellion. They would not break the laws, and therefore they would change them. It

would be well, too, if these Christians were to remember, that a love of peace, and the open advocacy of the principles on which alone peace can be permanent,—not silence,—are most compatible; that divine “wisdom is first *pure*, then peaceable;” and, lastly, that the same Saviour who “never cried aloud,” is also he who was sent “to *publish* judgment, till it be perfectly established; and whose energy is not to be abated nor broken until he hath firmly seated truth in the earth.”\*

“But the civil power,” it is held, “is of God; and he that resisteth the power resisteth God’s ordinance, and shall therefore be condemned; so that the duty of Christians is quiet submission.”

Now, to leave unnoticed the express decision of the same Spirit, which assures us that government is of human institution, (*ανθρωπίνη κτίσις*—1 Pet. ii. 13,) and that therefore it is the establishment of anarchy†—not any form or change of government—which is alone forbidden, we maintain that religious duties, if they interfere not with the persons and property of our fellow-citizens, must be excepted. For, besides that there is no reason in such arguments as these,—government is of God, and therefore we must do all that government sanctions; or, government is of God, and therefore it may compel its subjects to adopt its

\* Isa. xlii. 2—4.

† See note I.

faith, and punish them for consistently believing their own,—it is clear that the apostle himself excepted them. He never thought of observing the rites of heathenism, of professing what he did not believe, of keeping what he held to be truth in abeyance, because he knew it might tend to produce a change in the established system; so that the very precept, “Let every soul be subject to the higher powers,” while seeming to urge only submission, urges, too, upon Christians the duty of seeking, by all constitutional means, to do away with such laws as refer to questions in which “souls must be subject to God.” To obey the magistrate, it is necessary for me to see to it that he enjoin nothing which a still “higher power” has condemned.

“But ‘the citizenship’ (*ἡ πολιτεία*, Phil. iii. 20) of believers,” it may be answered, “is in heaven; with the rights and duties of earthly citizens they have no concern. Political Christianity is certainly not the Christianity of the Bible, still less is political dissent.”

This objection is easily removed. Our rights are confessedly sources of influence, our duties means of usefulness; and therefore comprised in the scripture meaning of the term “talents.” Let Christians beware, then, of the example of the “slothful servant,” and remember, that to “bury their talents,” in the fear that they might fail to improve them, is only another

form of indifference or of sloth. Political Christianity we, too, most earnestly condemn; Christian politics we warmly approve. Voluntaryism seeks the abolition of the one, and the establishment of the principles of the other.

The wit and full meaning of the second phrase,—“political dissent, and political dissenters,”—which some Christians are in the habit of applying to the voluntary cause, and of urging as plea enough for their standing aloof from the present contest, we have long been at a loss to understand. Is it intended to insinuate a sarcastic reproof of inconsistency, in praying the interference of a power whose authority in matters of religion voluntaries have never allowed? If so, we can only answer, that with such inconsistency they are not justly chargeable. Their petition is, that all legislation in the church should cease. They ask, not that the state should exert its power, but that all power may be withdrawn. Or, is it intended to censure them upon the assumption, that their objections against state churches rest on political grounds mainly? If so, we deny the truth of the charge, and would remind those who urge it, that, even were it founded in fact, we are, after all, not worse than Warburton, Paley, and the most enlightened advocates of ecclesiastical establishments, who defend them on the same ground, and upon no other; and



further, that it is but a paltry answer to our arguments to assert, that they are neither so numerous nor so weighty as we might have made them. Or, is it intended to intimate, that dissenters think too much of politics, whilst the cultivation of piety is neglected? If so, once more we ask for proof of the correctness of so grave an accusation; and would remind the advocates of political churches, that Christian principles cannot be applied too often to test the conduct of a government, and that the attention of dissenters has been directed to the politics of this question far less by their own tastes than by the overt acts of oppression of the church party, and by what they deem the exigencies of the times. They had much rather tread the quiet and secluded paths of literature and science,—or devote their lives to the one grand object of the Christian ministry, the preaching of the cross,—or enjoy, as in days for a season gone by, the delightful intercourse of Christian fellowship, and of Christian love; but all these avenues are now closed; across each—the path of learning, of devotedness, and of union—lie the barriers of proscription and injustice, moved only for the favourite sons of the church; and the opening of them all they feel to be essential to their unity and ultimate success. If Christians bring to this subject the principles of justice and religion, all opprobrious epithets will strengthen their cause. The

spirit of "the puritans," of "the methodists," of "the saints," will sustain them. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad . . . for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you. Great is your reward in heaven."

25. While the sentimental Christian has been urging in defence of neutrality his love of peace, that is, of repose,—his indifference to the rights of civil life, that is, in fact, to the claims of Christian duty,—the apostolic precept, a precept which implies that government should never attempt to regulate the faith of its subjects,—and his aversion to politics, that is, to the labour of forming his opinions of public questions on the principles of the gospel,—others have lifted up their voice, less doubtfully, for the continuance of the system, and for reasons such as the following:—First, they think it best that the teachers of the people should be independent of the changes of the popular mind; secondly, that religion should have all the stability of the civil power; thirdly, that in matters of so vital moment the state should occupy no neutral place; and lastly, that, with all the acknowledged disadvantages of ecclesiastical establishments, they are really the best means of diffusing the truth.

The answer to these reasonings will be very short, without being, it is hoped, the less conclusive, as they can never be urged from any well-founded conviction of their validity or soundness ; they seem, in fact, on examination, little else than the usual and impotent struggles of those who are unwilling to abandon a system which they are unable to defend. In the correctness of the premiss of the *first* argument we heartily concur. That religion should be wholly independent of the will and fickleness of men is certainly a principle of the scriptures ; but that it is a principle best carried out by state churches is an assertion as much at variance with reason as with universal experience. A ministry paid by the people can never be uninfluenced by their prejudice and passions. They have ever been, and will ever be, the creatures of the state. The history of our own country, and of all countries, proves it. The creed of the so-called English church has been changed repeatedly, and the clergy have uniformly signed each creed in succession.\* True, they have been firm to their principle ; but that principle has been, to continue, at least, vicars of their parishes till the last. Of all bodies, they are notoriously, with a few noble exceptions, the most truculent and time-serving. They are the spiritual janizaries of the ruling power, alternately the slaves

\* See note K.

and the tyrants of the court. With dissenting ministers, on the contrary, people and courts can never interfere. They are dependent for their support upon the good-will and devotedness of the *faithful*; so that, at worst, their ministry is, so far as they deem it consistent with Christian freedom, under the control of the Christian church.

The *second* argument, we should have thought, ought to have been given in the reversed form, had we not seen it so expressed by writers of the first authority on this question. We had deemed it possible, as Guizot has stated, that the civil power might need somewhat of the stability of truth; but that—"religion and truth should be dependent on the stability of the civil power"—is an assertion for which we are scarcely prepared. The doctrine is by no means novel, doubtless; for it was long since held, that the "whole earth would have been overrun with heresy, had not the emperors maintained the faith:"\* but we had thought that its age was no compensation for its want of truth, and that men were now more anxious to rest their faith on evidence than on authority. Granting, however, that this is the argument of our opponents, let us examine whether it is well founded.

\* Father Thomassin, quoted by Robinson, in his "Arcana," Letter vi.;—a work that would have been more useful if its illustrations of truth had been coloured in a spirit somewhat more charitable.

The religion of the Bible is the truth, and the religion of the heart is the belief of the truth ; whilst the belief of the truth is the result of an examination of evidence. Now, if men believe because the evidence seems to them conclusive, the sanction of the government is useless ; and if they believe on other grounds, their belief may be prejudice, or carelessness, or superstition, but certainly it is not faith. So that to urge in defence of the existent system, that religion needs the stability of the civil power, is to deny the conclusiveness of its evidence, or to assert the dependence of that conclusiveness upon the permanent sanction of the state. If it be said, in reply, that the profession of truth by a government will always influence the people to examine what is thus professed ; it is granted possible that such *may* be the result ; only, this very examination implies that neither pomp, nor penalties, nor authority, immortalize it, but evidence alone. Besides, even if it were allowed that in some circumstances truth has received help from the patronage of the civil power, it would still be a matter of doubt whether it were wise to advocate a principle which would, in fact, entrust it to the *permanent* keeping of what is proverbially short-lived and uncertain. We should still think “ it better that it should trust in the Lord than put confidence in man,—better that it should trust in the Lord than put confidence in

*princes.*" Truth can never be more feeble or less constant than an arm of flesh.

*Thirdly*,—"that in a matter of such vital moment as religion, government should occupy no neutral place,"—is an assertion which we shall have occasion to discuss in the following chapter. The very importance of the interests involved, however, may make it one day a solemn question,—whether it would not have been better to have left them alone. They that put forth their finger, even though it be to support the ark, are as likely to commit an act of self-sufficient impiety as to merit the praise of devoted reverence. The offering of "strange fire" by Nadab and Abihu was condemned only because God had not required it at their hands.

The *last* argument to which allusion was made will probably be deemed by many of the advocates of the compulsory system the strongest. They lay it down as a principle, that religion is a thing beneficial to the community, as well in its civil interests as in those of a higher order. Thence they argue, that the end being beneficial, the means must be instrumentally so; that these indirect penalties are not the final causes of the law,—the objects for which it was framed,—but only a discipline which, in tendency, operate in bringing over a deluded people to their real interest; and therefore, though they may be



harsh in their working, they will be pleasant in their results. They allow that establishments must practise injustice and persecution, but they plead in excuse that both are *expedient*.

To this term dissenters have, of course, no strong objection, provided that it be remembered in what circumstances it may be justly and prudently applied. The question of expediency is pertinent only in matters otherwise indifferent. If actions or principles involve neither "the just" nor "the true,"—to adopt the phraseology of one of the greatest of men,—then their tendency becomes the adjunct by which we must test them; in that case, the expedient is just; but if "justice" or "truth" is involved, the just, and the just alone, is the expedient.

If this distinction be allowed, it may be applied immediately to the settlement of the question in dispute. Under ecclesiastical establishments men are compelled to support a system of religious worship from which they derive no religious advantage; are punished for not doing what they cannot do, and what they dare not profess to do,—that is, for not believing what seems to them refuted by opposite and conclusive evidence; and therefore, it is held, that the continuance of them, thus impious and unequal, can never be conducive to the interests of the commonwealth. "Better is a little with justice, than great revenues

without right.”—“The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them.” Besides, in the example of the primitive church, God has “shewn us what is good,” and whoever sanctions practices of another kind sanctions them at his own risk,—“Add not thou unto his words, lest he reprove thee.” The question of the expediency of compulsion will cause no embarrassment to such as are prepared to imitate the holy wisdom of apostolic times.

Since the publication of the Letters of Locke, the argument of expediency\* has been considerably modified, so as to be a little more in consistency with the principles of toleration which are now in vogue. Up to the close of the seventeenth century, it was a very prevalent doctrine of establishments, that “the bodies of heretics might be burnt for the good of their souls,” and that “to take away the lives of men to make them Christians was no ill way of expressing a regard for their eternal safety.” In our day, however, this doctrine is stated less broadly. It is now held, that slight and secret penalties on dissenters, with prerogatives of influence and wealth granted to such as conform, may be of more service

\* We are considering now the expediency of state churches, viewed in their influence on dissenters. Their influence on the minds of nations, who may be considered as indifferent, we have already discussed.—*See on the Unity, the Spirituality, and the Success of Established Churches*, §§ 19, 20, 21.

to religion than the open, unseemly compulsion of the past; inasmuch as they secure all the substantial advantages of state-favour, without awakening on the side of the oppressed the sympathies of the people.

“From the present system,” it is held, “result two classes of advantages: the churchman is favoured, for his religious luxuries are still supplied at the cost of the dissenter, and the wealth and honour of the church are still within the grasp of his ambition; and the dissenter is favoured, for the thorns which the government has put in his path are likely to induce him to lend an ear to such as tell him he is mistaken. Men, it is notorious, are generally averse to a due consideration of things, even where they are most concerned to consider them; and either so ignorant of religion, through negligence, or so prejudiced, that neither the gentlest persuasions nor the most earnest entreaties can ever prevail with them to give an impartial examination to the truth: so that, did the system only make their path uneasy by bringing them often to a stand, and inducing them to think whether they have not got into the wrong way, it were still a system deserving of the support of wise men, and even of good Christians.”

The language used in describing the characters for whom these secret penalties are designed, and the good to be attained by them, has been diversified according to the taste and charity of different writers.

Sometimes they are the “negligent and thoughtless;” sometimes, the “partial and prejudiced;” sometimes, “the obstinate and infidel.” The end is—“to make them examine the religion of the state, so that they may embrace the truth;”—“to persuade them to weigh matters impartially, to bring them from under the power of passion, that they may act according to reason and sound judgment;” or at least—“to induce them to ask, whether the religion for which they undergo such inconveniences is indeed true;” and thus—“to transfer them out of the power of darkness into the ‘kingdom of God.’”

To minds not thoroughly saturated with the maxims and spirit of the gospel, this system of *charitable* persecution may probably seem recommended by strong, and apparently no immoral motives of policy; while, in truth, it is at bottom rotten and corrupted, as indeed all systems must be that are founded on any, even the minutest, degree of positive injustice. To the scheme itself, as thus stated, it is intended to urge only three objections:—1. It is impracticable. 2. It is unrighteous. 3. It is injurious to those high and holy interests which it professes to promote.

1. It is impracticable to punish dissenters *only* because they are prejudiced and thoughtless in neglecting to examine impartially the religion of the state: for besides that the churchman is as likely to be prejudiced

in favour of its emoluments and honours, it is clearly impossible for any but the Omniscient God to know with what amount of prejudice and inconsideration each man is chargeable. Further, men are punished whether they consider or no. That question is never asked them. If they conform, they are rewarded, not for consideration but for conformity; if they do not conform, they are punished, not for inconsideration but for dissent.

Nor can the object of this indirect punishment be stated in any terms that may represent it less impracticable and contradictory. "Is it to induce man to submit to instruction and to give a *fair hearing* to arguments that might at length enlighten and convince them?" Dissenters profess to have discharged this duty, and unless their plea can be disproved, it is absurd to punish them for neglecting it. "Is it to persuade them to weigh the matter *impartially*?" Why, then, put hopes of preferment and respectability on the one side, with punishment and proscription on the other? "Is it to make men *think as they ought of the importance* of salvation?" Possibly so; but why not apply this sovereign remedy to the nominal members of the church? It is at best somewhat suspicious that she should give all the *hellebore* of her garden to her neighbour's children, while she thinks it imprudent to give it to her own. "Is it that men

should *not leave their religion to others or to their own passions*, that these punishments are inflicted?" What, then, is self-interest, ambition, fear? Are they the elements of the "dry light" so needful for intellectual vision? If not, why teach us to yield to the impulse of one passion, lest we should follow the guidance of another? The fear of suffering sends up vapours around the eye of reason as thick and noxious as the love of consistency, as obstinacy, or firmness, and is therefore to the full as injurious to the perception of truth: and if these penalties be inflicted on such as "*leave their religion to others,*" or follow only the guidance of passion, why are they free who leave it to the priest, or the bishop, or the church? Or, is it to "*make them listen to those who know they are mistaken, and who are desirous of shewing them the right way?*" If so, then will each sect and each creed claim, in succession, state patronage and state power. Or, is it, lastly, to "*compel men to consider the controversy between the magistrate and themselves till they be persuaded of the truth of his creed?*" If so, how then, in the estimate of the episcopalian Christian, must the controversy be decided between the quaker and the presbyterian, the Mahamadan and the Jew? All are wrong! So that till falsehood have the attributes of truth, or till men may be convinced *against* evidence, the appeal is to



force and physical strength. The argument we hold perfectly conclusive: establishments would stigmatize and punish dissenters because they are thoughtless and prejudiced. Punishment, it is universally admitted, should never be inflicted except for crimes perpetrated and *proven*, and never denounced except against crimes capable of proof, nor then unless punishment be a *public* duty, and fitted to prevent the repetition of them; but it is impossible that men can be *proved* guilty of thoughtlessness or prejudice, unless not to think impartially and not to be of the national faith are one; and even if they be proved guilty, it is by no means clear that by fear of punishment and hopes of reward all prejudice will be removed. The case is, then, that dissenters are punished for what is no crime—prejudice and inconsideration; or if a crime, for what no man can prove; or if it can be proved, for what no punishment can cure or prevent. What theory of punishment justifies from the charge, not of injustice only, but of madness, such treatment?\*

\* Different writers on establishments have attempted to get rid of this charge of punishing dissenters for their conscientious belief, by asserting, that such punishment is never more than is requisite for the safety and continuance of the system. This is Burke's plea, and substantially it is Warburton's. The latter denies that establishments inflict punishment, and maintains that they only impose necessary restrictions. What they do inflict is not *penal*, but only *defensive*. The answer to these pleas is obvious; for, in fact, they

2. This scheme of punishment is obviously *unrighteous*. Men are punished because not of the national church; and they are not of the national church because not convinced. But not to admit what is not believed is clearly no fault, and therefore to punish it as such is to violate the commonest principles of justice and reason. Besides, not to profess what is disbelieved is a *Christian* duty; so that men are punished, professedly for not considering, but really for doing as God had enjoined them.

3. It is injurious; because more likely to be adopted on behalf of error than of truth; because when on the side of truth its palpable injustice is more likely to give men an aversion to the religion that sanctions it than to win them to its side; and lastly, because when successful, it is little likely to make them its hearty supporters. Hypocrisy, atheism, and formal Christianity have ever been the natural offspring of this unpropitious union of state and church.\*

amount only to this: such pains and restrictions are absolutely essential to an establishment, and therefore they cannot be withdrawn so long as the establishment is upheld,—a statement true, certainly, but without even the shadow of a reason for an establishment itself. It is because such *defensive* restrictions are essential to establishments that we seek to remove them. It is useless to reform the system; it must be abolished, or men still suffer—call their suffering punishment, or restraint, or what you will—for their conscientious faith. —See *the Alliance between Church and State*, book iii. chap. 3.

\* The author has ventured to repeat a few of the arguments

What ungodliness, and misery, and guilt would have been spared us had some bold and devoted servant of the cross forbade for ever, and at the outset, the banns of so unholy an alliance!

But out of "their own mouth" may the advocates of this system of "gentle punishment" be condemned. Their system is either, in its influence on the progress of religion, a blessing or a curse; it is either injurious or useful. If injurious, let it be abandoned; if useful, how is it that it is not universally applied? It is held expedient that all who dissent from the established creed should be proscribed, because error is injurious to the purity of the church, to the glory of God, and to the salvation of men; but is not adultery, uncleanness, and idolatry,—the spiritual idolatry of the heart,—as inconsistent with the purity of the church and with the great ends for which, it is professed, the church form is established?—and if so, how is it that no "gentle punishment," no "indirect force," is applied to remove them? Is it well or seemly that the government should pass by states of

of Locke on Toleration, in the persuasion that a forgetfulness of such works is one of the greatest evils of the present times. The "Oxford Tracts" would never have been written had men understood the principles advocated by Jeremy Taylor, Chillingworth, Locke, and Milton; or even had they studied the *practices* of the early reformers. It is happily ominous of the result of the present struggle that all treatises on private judgment and other reformation questions are, in truth, treatises in favour of the voluntary system.

the heart and practices which all men acknowledge to be opposed to the gospel and utterly inconsistent with the possession of vital religion, and bend all its influence to the establishment of opinions on nice and intricate questions, which few can understand, and which have never been supposed to be essential to holiness and salvation, or to exert over the lives of men any great practical power? How is it that multitudes, who can never enter into heaven, are knowingly allowed to enter what is called the service of the church; while others, confessedly pious and devoted, are made objects of bitter persecution, have their influence injured, their names and labours stamped with infamy, their peace and respectability destroyed? The men who are thus less active in the extirpation of immorality than in the punishment of sects are either fearful of the soundness of their weapon, or desirous of the advancement of another kingdom than the kingdom of God.

26. Perhaps this chapter on the evils of state patronage, and of consequent state proscription, may be best closed by an examination of the evidence of the New Testament. We have seen that the injustice of making one man pay for the support of the religion of another is implicitly condemned in the Scriptures; which teach, *first*, that they, and they only, who "receive" the ministers of Christ are to be ex-

pected to support them; and, *secondly*, that the amount given by each Christian is to be left to the promptings of his own gratitude and affection. We shall now proceed to shew that proscription and punishment are inconsistent, (1) with the example and precepts of Christ and his apostles, (2) with the only system of penalties which the gospel sanctions, (3) with the nature of religion as a service of *voluntary* devotedness, and (4) lastly, with a fundamental principle of Christ's reign, which expressly forbids his disciples to ask or allow the aids of the civil power.

(1.) As establishments involve the infliction of temporal punishment on all dissentient sects,—loss of property, of usefulness, of character,—and that, too, just in proportion to the influence of them over the popular mind, they are utterly at variance with the example and precepts of Christ. His zeal was never displayed but in vehement and persevering persuasion. When his disciples would have called down fire upon a Samaritan village, whose inhabitants had refused to receive him, “He turned and rebuked them.” (Luke, ix. 54—56.) Peter, “who smote for great love of him,” as was long ago said, “had no great thank of him for his smiting.” When the Jews had rejected his offers, and the threatenings of *another* economy were about to be fulfilled, he wept over them. The last penalties of the law were siege, and

famine, and death (Deut. xxviii.); TEARS OF PITY are the last penalties of the gospel.

His apostles displayed throughout the same spirit. They began at Jerusalem, and, after their message had been treated there with contempt, they turned sorrowing to the Gentiles. In their preaching they were eminently successful in "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of the truth," not because they had with them the sword of the magistrate or the offices of the state, but because they "besought" men by the "gentleness and meekness" of the Saviour. The "destruction" of the finally impenitent and ungodly they foretold "even weeping;" and they have now handed it down to the church as a rule, sanctioned by infinite wisdom, and confirmed by apostolic experience, that ministers "should be gentle unto all men, in meekness instructing such as oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, may give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." (2 Tim. ii. 25.) Tears and instruction, not strife, (2 Tim. ii. 24,) or anger, or punishment, are the only means of diffusing the gospel which the Spirit has himself allowed. The "foolishness of God," be it remembered, "is wiser than men;" and therefore it becomes us to be careful how we add to his plans any "wisdom" of our own, however well fitted for success it may seem to ourselves.



(2.) This leniency on the part of Christ and his apostles must not be supposed, however, to imply that men are left to their own tastes to accept the blessings of the gospel or not, as they please, and after all be alike forgiven; on the contrary, there is a system of punishment most clearly unfolded in the New Testament, utterly opposed, however, to the system instituted by "the church." When a member of a Christian community acts inconsistently with his profession, and admonition has been tried in vain, Christ teaches that his fellow members are to exclude him. "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." No personal violence, no secular penalty, no deprivation of civil honours, is to be denounced against him—"Let him be removed." The only punishment, therefore, which the church, acting in consistency with the example and precepts of her founder, may inflict is *spiritual*; and that punishment it may inflict only on its own members. "Those that are without" are to be left "*unjudged*." (1 Cor. v. 12.)

All other penalties are *future*. "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, shake off the dust under your feet against them. Verily, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the *day of judgment* than for that city." "The punishment of the unjust is *reserved* unto the

day of judgment." (2 Pet. ii. 9; Rom. ii. 12, 16.) They, therefore, that reject the gospel are to be "*left alone*," (Matt. xiii. 30,) not taxed. The bar of God, no earthly tribunal, is the only place where they ought to be expected to plead. It is, in truth, a solemn thought, that by "forbidding men to buy or sell, unless they have the mark of conformity on their forehead or their hand," establishments have not only "judged before the time," but have literally set themselves above God, and assumed a power which no divine person in our world has ever wielded—the power of inflicting *temporal* punishment on such as receive not the religion of the state.

(3.) We object to the system again, because whatever is gained by it in wealth or influence is, in truth, "an abomination." No offering was accepted under the law, no gift is accepted under the gospel, unless brought "willingly." The tabernacle and the temple were both built by "voluntary contributions." All compulsion was forbidden, all compulsory offerings condemned. (Exodus, xxv. 2; xxxv. 5; 1 Chron. xxix. 6—18.) In all acts of devotedness under the gospel, the apostles constantly impressed upon the churches that all things were to be done with a "willing mind," else they "were not accepted," (2 Cor. viii. 12;) that each man was to give as "he purposed

in his heart," not "grudgingly or of compulsion,"\* because God approves only "what is cheerfully given." (2 Cor. ix. 4—7.)

Now it is notorious that the tithes and prerogatives of state churches are not willingly conceded them: and what is the result? The "freedom" (1 Cor. ix. 19) of Christians is violated. "They are called to liberty," and "if they serve one another" it must be, not "by necessity, but by love." (Gal. v. 13.) The offering of God is regarded with universal "abhorrence," "because taken by force." (1 Sam. ii. 17.) The tithes, churches, services of religion, are all of them the sacrifice of the wicked, and therefore an abomination. (Prov. xxi. 27.) "I, the Lord, love judgment: robbery for burnt-offering I hate." (Isaiah, lxi. 8.)

(4.) Besides, Christ has expressly renounced the aids of the secular power. "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, then would my disciples have fought; but my kingdom is not hence." (John, xviii. 36.) That this is the meaning of this declaration will appear obvious if we call to mind the immediate occasion on which it was uttered. At the time of the appearance of Christ there was a strong expecta-

\* The delicacy of the apostle's feeling in absenting himself from Corinth till their collection had been taken, lest they should be influenced unwillingly by his presence, is remarkably beautiful. (2 Cor. ix. 5.)

tion very generally prevalent amongst Jews and Gentiles of the coming of a temporal Messiah, about to establish a kingdom that should involve, not only worldly splendour and greatness, but also the spiritual blessings of a future state. The *spiritual* prerogatives Christ claimed and promised to his followers; the *temporal* prerogatives he expressly disowned. The Jews looked for a kingdom both of this world and of the next. They hoped that the Messiah would first have founded a temporal kingdom, and sanctioned the acquirement of temporal power by secular means, and then have delegated his authority (as God did of old to the kings) to his “anointed,” in whom his Spirit should dwell. Jesus, therefore, not only claimed *spiritual* dominion, but also renounced *temporal*. He declared, not only that his kingdom is of the *next* world, but also that it is *not* of the *present*.\*

Now, unless it can be proved, as Austin and some of the Romanists hold,† that this announcement was intended only to conceal the designs of the apostles during the weakness of the infant cause; we cannot but conclude that as the weapons which establishments wield are far other than the weapons of the gospel, so they are opposed to the great end of the

\* See note L.

† See Bayle's *Commentaire Philosophique sur ces Paroles de Jesus Christ, Contrain les d'entrer.*—Pt. 1, chap. v.

Saviour's coming—the formation of a spiritual dominion, unlimited and uncrippled by the changes and imbecility of the temporal power.

That we have now given the right interpretation of this statement might easily be proved further by the whole conduct of Christ, and by an examination of the design of the gospel. It might first be shewn to be a strong presumption in its favour that Christ never speaks with approbation of any system but such as is founded on *voluntary* exertion; that having received in his character as Mediator “all power on earth and in heaven,” he gave no commission to his disciples but to “teach all nations,” not to tax or to punish them; that he himself sought first and mainly the conversion of the people, of the poor, not of the magistrate; and, in a word, that his example and precepts were all of them in the spirit of meekness and of love. It might then be shewn that the use of force in matters of religion, *into which all the sanctions of the civil ruler are ultimately resolvable*, is unjust and impious; that it cannot convince the mind, nor induce it to examine such arguments as might be productive of conviction; that while it has often given, and is now giving, a temporary stability to error, which is founded on *prejudice*, it can never give immortality to truth, which rests solely upon *evidence*; that it has never secured union or kept men from

apostasy; and that, as history and common sense agree in affirming, it has done more harm than good to the oneness, the spirituality, the success of the church. Some of the steps of this proof have been pointed out, others of them must be left to the perception of the reader. Thus much at least is obvious: experience and scripture are altogether at one in their decisions. The reign of Christ in the hearts of men allows neither the sanctions nor the interference of the powers of the world. The punishments and the favours of men never promote the true interests of the kingdom of God. They are in their essence unjust.

That these facts and arguments will have great weight with *all* inquirers there is no hope: most men and most nations are contented to pace round the same circle of delusion and sin, till again and again the crimes of centuries “be required at the hands of the one generation.” But with single-minded Christians such facts and reasonings, it is hoped, may be sufficient to settle the question. Let them only seek in the book of the divine word, and in the book of the divine dealings, a *guide* for their opinions and conduct, not a *justification* of them; let the light of experience be shed but half as brightly over their future path as it shines on the past; and we feel persuaded that all state ecclesiastical establishments will speedily and for ever cease.



## CHAPTER V.

## OF THE OFFICE AND DUTIES OF THE CIVIL RULER.

“ Besides to know  
Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,  
What severs each, thou hast learn'd, which few have done :  
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe :  
Therefore on thy right hand Religion leans,  
And reckons thee in chief her eldest son.”

MILTON, Sonnet xvii. MS. reading.

“ I esteem it, above all things, necessary to distinguish exactly the business of civil government from that of religion, and to settle the just bounds that lie between the one and the other. If this be not done, there can be no end put to the controversies that will be always arising between those that have, or at least pretend to have, on the one side, a concernment for the interest of men's souls, and on the other, a care of the commonwealth. . . . These considerations, to omit many others that might have been urged to the same purpose, seem unto me sufficient to conclude, that all the power of civil government relates only to men's civil interests, is confined to the care of the things of this world, and hath nothing to do with the world to come. . . . With the care of souls the civil magistrate ought not to interfere.”

LOCKE, *Letter on Toleration*, Works, fol., Lond. 1759, pp. 244, 245.

“ A law against the majority of the people is, in substance, a law against the people itself; *its extent determines its invalidity*; it is not particular injustice, but general oppression; and can no longer be considered as a private hardship, which might be borne, but spreads and grows up into the unfortunate importance of a national calamity. . . .

“ A law directed against the mass of the nation has not the nature, nor has it the authority, of a reasonable institution.”

BURKE, *Tracts on the Popery Laws*.

“ The ruler is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that *doeth* evil.”—ROMANS, xiii. 4.

1. THE most popular reply to these arguments on the evils and injustice of establishments is one that

claims more attention than has yet been given to any of the replies which have hitherto been noticed. It may be stated broadly in terms like these—"It is the duty of a government to instruct its subjects in religion;" or, more guardedly, "It is the duty of a *Christian* government to instruct its subjects in the truths of the *Christian* faith."

As the main subject of this chapter is an examination of the duties and office of the civil magistrate in matters of religion, it would be useless to spend time in illustrating the evils consequent upon the establishment of disputed points in theology and useless rites of worship, which, however harmless when regarded as indifferent, become most noxious when once established. These are left altogether out of view; and we come at once to the substance of the argument itself.

2. It is but fair, however, to premise, that this statement of the argument is by no means just, inasmuch as it does not touch the question in dispute. The proposition that ought to be proved is this—that it is the duty of a government, or of a *Christian* government, to compel its subjects to diffuse what some of them—in this country the *majority* of them, only the proportion is no part of the question—do not believe, and to punish them for their unbelief. If any object to this statement of the doctrine, the answer is obvious—

Shew us an establishment supported *unanimously* by the people, and where there is no punishment, no compulsion, but *all* are its voluntary supporters, and dissenters will bid it God's speed, and wish it continuance of union and success. It is such establishments only as involve compulsion, persecution, and injustice that dissenters condemn.

3. The first question that presents itself is of the last moment, and one which has received answers so contradictory, that if oneness be an attribute of truth, there is no truth in any of them, nor in the principle which they are adduced to support. On what law, or on what authority, is this duty of the civil magistrate founded? On the law of nature—that is, of equity or of utility—or on the law of revelation? Both answers have their advocates, and therefore it is important that each of them be carefully examined. Take first, then, the law of revelation, as explained in the precepts and in the examples of the Bible; and in neither will it be possible to find even the shadow of an argument in favour of the existent system.

4. (i.) The *first* appeal is to the example of the Jewish Theocracy. “Under the economy of the law,” it is held, “the diffusion of religious opinions was sanctioned by the highest authority; the Levites were even set apart and paid to diffuse them; and therefore, unless it can be shewn that the precepts or the

principles of the gospel set it aside, the question must be regarded as for ever settled by Jehovah himself."

Now, in answer to this argument, let it be observed—

1. If the diffusion or the maintenance of opinions were the end of the law, it failed. It is notorious, that while the Jews practised its precepts, for its truths or spirituality they had no regard. It was to them a volume of characters only, not of meaning and promise ; and hence, when Christ appeared, they rejected his explanation of it with almost universal contempt. Besides, when that "which is perfect has come," Christians should be cautious in taking precedents from an economy which was but "in part," and which most judicious inquirers hold to be abrogated by the economy of the gospel.\*
2. The Jewish was a secular, not a spiritual system. Its object was—not the maintenance or the diffusion of opinion, but—the observance of the laws. The Levites, who had their share of the land of promise in tithes, were not merely the religious teachers of the people ; they were the officers of the state, the servants of the invisible King.†
3. God himself was lawgiver and judge : his de-

\* See note M.

† See note N.

cisions were infallibly true, and his precepts infallibly just. Unless, therefore, it can be proved that this attribute of infallibility has actually been communicated to the state church, there is no resemblance between the circumstances of the Jewish government and the circumstances of our own.

4. The institutions of that economy were adopted with the *unanimous* and repeated consent of the community at large. There was an explicitly legalized contract between the people and God—a contract solemnly ratified at different periods of their history.\* Now, if in modern times it can be shewn that the *universal* suffrages of a nation have entrusted to the hands of their rulers their

\* The Jewish economy, with all its peculiarities, was expressly *accepted* by the Jewish nation; and this acceptance of it was ratified at different times, not virtually, but actually and collectively, by the whole people; by “their elders, their officers, with all the men of Israel, their little ones, their wives, and the stranger within their camp, from the hewer of their wood to the drawer of their water.” (Deut. xxix. 10—12; Exod. xix. 5, 6; Deut. v. 2, 3; Josh. xxiv. 22; 2 Kings, xi. 17; 2 Chron. xv. 12—15.)

Is there even the semblance of logical truth in such reasonings as these—Because God himself saw it right to enforce his own law, moral and ceremonial, on the Jewish people, who had *voluntarily* accepted it, therefore the civil magistrate may enforce *his* notions of religion on the consciences of his subjects who do *not* accept them, but who believe them, on the contrary, repugnant to the statements of the Bible? It must be a somewhat curious minor premiss that connects such facts with such a conclusion.

right of thinking and judging for themselves, no one can object to the exercise of such a power on the part of the government. It may still be doubted whether the people have acted nobly, or even justly, in giving up what is no more their own *to be so applied* than life itself, and whether their rulers have acted wisely in accepting the trust; but there can be no doubt that if it has been formally offered and formally accepted, all the opinions of the people for that generation may be controlled by the government till it be as formally withdrawn.

Now, even allowing that the two cases are perfectly similar, this last point alone excepted, dissenters would be fully warranted in rejecting the analogy, and in denying all conclusions drawn from it, till they be shewn a contract as real and as explicit as that which the Jewish people accepted as their charter and law.\*

5. The *second* appeal is to express statements of scripture, which is often quoted, though without the

\* This is one of the arguments of Dr. Inglis—see his *Vindication of Ecclesiastical Establishments*, p. 136. Of course, it only goes to justify the establishment of the *Christian* faith. The flaws in the reasoning consist—in applying an example of a *voluntary* establishment to the defence of a *compulsory* one; and in concluding, that what has been done by a holy and infallible God may be done by fallible and imperfect men.



slightest foundation, on the side of the present system.

There is, for example, the prophecy of Isaiah, xlix. 23, that kings shall be the “foster-fathers” and “queens the nursing-mothers” of the church.

Now, if the reader will be at the pains of examining this chapter, he will find it wholly inapplicable to these times. It will be seen that its fulfilment is subsequent to the restoration of Israel; that kings are to be the servants, not the lords, of the church; that they are to swaddle it, not in robbery and penalties, but in free gifts and in love. Besides, if it be insisted that this promise must be fulfilled now, is it not more appropriate and more consistent even with the words of the prophecy, that these “foster-fathers” and “nursing-mothers” should cherish, by pains and discipline, those that *are in the church* rather than those who have left it? Whatever be the meaning of the passage, however, it will be somewhat hard to shew that it warrants civil governors in punishing such of their subjects as cannot conscientiously admit the scriptural origin of the established faith.

6. “But parents are commanded to ‘bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;’ and kings are the ‘shepherds of their people,’ the fathers of their country, and therefore bound to in-

struct their subjects in the truths of the Christian faith."

Such is one of the favourite analogies of the advocates of establishments; but one so fanciful that it scarcely needs a reply. It is a presumption against the conclusions founded upon it, that there is no positive precept on its side. Fathers, husbands, masters, have all of them their duties defined, their natural powers confirmed or limited; and yet Christian magistrates are left without any information on either the extent of their powers, or the kind of instrumentality which the "Author of our faith" sanctions. The Bible is surely not wont to be thus niggard of its prescriptions. But even had the precept been—*Magistrates*, "train up your subjects in the nurture of the Lord,"—it would still be a serious question, whether penalties and compulsion are the elements of the moral nurture to which the Spirit refers. A Christian parent has power to forbid whatever *conduct* he deems wrong, and government is, doubtless, by natural law, invested with the same power; but no parent ever dreamed of punishing his child for not believing with himself in matters either momentous or indifferent. He may ply arguments, and prayers, and tears; but punishment or proscription never enters his thoughts. If magistrates are parents, let them content themselves with forcibly

regulating the *actions* of their subjects; or, if they must attempt to regulate their faith, let them attempt it, not by taxes and penalties, but by reason and love. "The weapons of their warfare" must never be more carnal than these; else, however mighty they be, they will certainly not be mighty to the "pulling down of strongholds," or to the extension of the boundaries of the "reign of God."

7. "But magistrates," it is replied again, "are men, and many of them are Christians, with feelings and opinions of their own, and with the natural and commendable desire of maintaining and diffusing them; so that, if their opinions be true, it is wrong to forbid them, as governors, to promote the eternal good of men, by bringing them to the truth; and if they be false, it is impossible to prevent the diffusion of them."\*

Now, to this argument it is answer enough, that the magistrate is not told, that on the acceptance of office he must forego the privilege of diffusing his opinions, but only that the exercise of that privilege is no part of his *official* duty, and that, therefore, it is not expected he should diffuse them at the *public* cost. Magistracy does not compel him to put off either humanity or religion. He may still *persuade* men to believe, because he is a *Christian*; only he may not

\* Dr. Chalmers has not hesitated to sanction this reasoning.

command them to believe, because a *magistrate*. He may press them with arguments, but not with penalties. His natural desires he may gratify as largely as it may please him, in spite of his station; but it must be out of his *own*, not out of *another's*. Besides, office is not compulsory, if he object to its legitimate restrictions.

To other arguments, founded on scripture statements, there will afterwards be occasion to allude. Come we now to such as are founded on the law of nature,—that is, on the principles and professed objects of the authority of the civil power.

8. (ii.) The advocates of this *second* law have generally rejected as useless all arguments founded upon the first. The law of Revelation is, of course, not needed when we have the law of nature for our guide. They allow, for the most part, “that our Saviour has given to magistrates no new commission; nor was there need that he should, for he found them already, even by the law of nature, the ‘ministers of God for good,’—that is, invested with co-active power, and obliged to use it for all the good purposes which it might serve, and for which it should be found needful, even for the restraining of false and corrupt religion; so that, though he gave them no new power, (which was unnecessary,) yet, being ‘King of kings,’ he expects and requires that they should submit themselves

to his sceptre, and use the power which always belonged to them for his service, and for the advancing of his spiritual kingdom in the earth."

Now, though it is a somewhat strong presumption against this reasoning,—that the religion which has so minutely described relative duties in cases of less moment should have said nothing of the duty of the Christian magistrate,—that, though it prescribed the limits of the authority of parents, masters, husbands, who are invested with their powers by the same law, it has yet said nothing of the extent of that "gentle punishment" which is to be so effective in bringing men to the truth,—and that Christ himself never once spoke of the advantages of temporal sanctions, or of the commission of magistrates, in matters of faith; We waive all these questions, and come at once to the argument. But let us for a moment examine the phrase on which the whole reasoning is founded—the law of nature.

The expression is confessedly ambiguous, and has therefore been regarded with suspicion. Sometimes it refers to the motives of action supplied by the instincts and affections common to every individual of our species. In this sense, the desire of happiness and of self-preservation is a natural law. Sometimes, to those general principles of equity which seem almost connate with reason itself, and which once seen are

universally approved. In this sense, the regulation of our own desire of happiness, *by a regard for the just rights of another*, is a natural law. In most instances, both senses are combined, and all plans are said to be founded upon that law which have for their *end* the gratification of some of our natural propensities, and for their *rule*, those common principles of justice to which men have agreed to appeal. *The* law of nature, therefore, is the pursuit of this end, under the control of these principles.

In applying this comprehensive definition to determine the duty of governments in matters of faith, it is not to be supposed that it undergoes any important change ; so that when it is said that the authority of the magistrate to support any one system of religion is founded upon the law of nature, the expression must be intended to imply, that the exercise of that authority is eminently consistent with the decisions of justice and the promotion of the “greatest happiness of the greatest number.” In other words, such authority has all the sanctions of just expediency, and none besides.\*

\* If it were necessary to strengthen this position by authorities, they might be multiplied to almost any extent. “In reality,” says Burke, “there are two, and only two, foundations of law ; and they are both of them conditions without which nothing can give it any force. I mean equity and utility. With respect to the former, it grows out of the great rule of equality, which is grounded upon our



To a plain reader, it will doubtless afford matter—of amusement to find the advocates of such transcendental appeals to the law of nature and the disciples of modern utilitarianism so heartily agreed,—of surprise, that they should have ventured, under the cover of profundity and learning, to beg the whole question of “the just and the useful;” the very question in dispute,—and of suspicion, whether even abstract justice ought to regulate the conduct of men whose *first* rule is Christian love. Whatever objections, however, might have been founded on these anomalies we are contented to forego, and plead the issue of the argument itself.

common nature, and which Philo, with propriety and beauty, calls the Mother of Justice. All human laws are, properly speaking, only declaratory; they may alter the mode and application, but have no power over the substance of original justice. The other foundation of law, which is utility, must be understood, not of partial and limited, but of general and public, utility, connected in the same manner with, and derived directly from, our rational nature; for any other utility may be the utility of a robber, but cannot be that of a citizen—the interest of a domestic enemy, and not that of a member of the commonwealth. Law is a mode of human action respecting society, and must be governed by the same rules of equity which govern every private action. And so Tully considers it, in his *Offices*, as the only utility agreeable to that nature:—‘Unum debet esse omnibus propositum, ut eadem sit utilitas unius cujusque et universorum; quam si ad se quisque rapiat, dissolvetur omnis humana consortio.’” Mackintosh, Cicero, and, in truth, all the great fountains of jurisprudence, supply us with the same definitions. *De Leg.* i. 15. Mackintosh, *On the Law of Nature and Nations*, pp. 7—10.

Of the *questio juris*—the equity of the system—reason and common sense are the judges. Is it just that men should be compelled to support a religion which they do not believe, and from which they derive no direct advantage,—that they should suffer for what deserves no blame, believing according to what seems to them the strongest evidence,—that they should be punished for doing as God has commanded them, acting in accordance with the persuasion of their own mind,—that they should be forbidden to imitate the example of apostolic times, when men gave to religion as they “purposed in their heart,” not as was enacted by the state? On the “point of right” (*jus*, not *lex*) there can be only one decision; and it is certainly on the side of dissent.

Of the *questio facti*—the utility of the system—we have for our jury the common experience of men. That the magistrate, to whom truth is “but rarely known, and more rarely welcome,” should have authority to compel others to diffuse only what he himself believes, and what they conscientiously condemn,—that he should be permitted by any law to adopt sanctions which must make his subjects either indifferent to the evidence of truth, or hate the truth for what it costs them, or prone to rebellion,—that a system which has ever been maintained at the cost of immense treasure and blood should ally itself to a re-

ligion of peace,—that Christians should support a doctrine which implies that all the missionaries of the cross in heathen lands are ministers of sedition,—that the religion of heaven should be forced to lend its aid and expend its strength in supporting governments that cannot, through imbecility or injustice, venture to stand alone, and to share in their fortunes and weakness,—that things indifferent should be made binding on the consciences of men, in the name, too, of Him who forbade his disciples to be called “Master,”—that “oneness of heart” should be given up or endangered for “oneness of forms,”—are all of them propositions too monstrous to be allowed. Let any twelve men be taken, free from prejudice and interest on this question; let there be laid before them the history of the church, merely premising that religion itself is a religion of “peace and goodwill;” tell them of the intrigues and secularity of the clergy of the East, of the arrogance and atrocities of Rome, of the feeble, but not less unchristian, cruelties of Lambeth\* and

\* It is remarkable enough that there were as many persons put to death for their religion during the reign of Elizabeth as during the reign of Mary. No doubt, the reign of the popish sister was much shorter than that of Elizabeth; but still this fact is proof enough of the spirit of *established* protestantism. Some were burnt, others banished, others hanged, and others died in imprisonment, through poverty and want. All *endowed* religions, without exception, have been, in spirit and in practice, intolerant. Luther defends every punishment inflicted on heretics but death—such as

Oxford, or read them the last page of the history of Ireland; and dissenters will be contented to abide by their verdict. It can be no other than that we have given; and to be universally approved, it only needs

“banishment, correction, restraint;” and agreeably with this opinion, which even the gentle Melancthon did not hesitate to sanction, Jews, and Zuinglians, themselves protestants, were proscribed by the electors of Saxony, and at Luther’s request. The letters of Calvin to Farrel are sufficient evidence of the sentiments of the Genevese reformer. The same spirit was displayed by Beza, and most of the early reformers; by the protestant cantons of Bern, Basil, Zurich; by the protestants of Holland, and the synod of Dort. —See *Chandler’s History of Persecution*, Book iv.

The following is Neale’s summary of the sufferings of the Puritans: —“The writer of the preface to Mr. Delaune’s *Plea for the Nonconformist* says that Delaune was one of near eight thousand who had perished in prison in the reign of Charles II., and that merely for dissenting from the church on some points, for which they were able to give good reason. As for the severe penalties inflicted on them for seditious and riotous assemblies, designed only for the worship of God, he adds, that they suffered in their trades and estates, within the compass of five years, at least *two* millions. Another writer adds, that Mr. Jeremy White had carefully collected a list of the dissenting sufferers and of their sufferings, and had the names of *sixty thousand persons* who had suffered on a religious account, between the restoration of Charles II. and the revolution of King William; *five thousand* of whom died in prison; many transported themselves to America and to Holland. If we admit the dissenting families of the several denominations in England to be one hundred and fifty thousand, and that each family suffered no more than the loss of three or four pounds per annum, from the act uniformity, the whole will amount to twelve or fourteen millions, a prodigious sum for those times. But these are only conjectures. The damage done to the trade and property of the nation was undoubtedly immense, and the wounds that were made in the estates of private families were deep and large, many of whom, to my knowledge, wear the scars of them to this day.”

that the evidence be universally known. Voluntaries may never be fearful of success till threatened with a return of the darkness of the past. That system must be ultimately prevalent whose triumphs are thus closely identified with the progress of knowledge and of truth.

9. This argument on the law of nature, or the objects of civil government, is sometimes stated without the semblance of learning, and apparently in the language of common sense, with considerable effect. "Commonwealths have been framed," it is held, "for the attaining of all the benefits which civil government can yield; and therefore, if the spiritual and eternal interests of men may any way be advanced by them, the advancing these interests must, in all reason, be received amongst the ends of civil society, and so fall within the province of the jurisdiction of the magistrate."

Sometimes the argument is stated in *form* more logical, thus:—"The legislature is bound to consult the public good in all things; but religion is fitted to promote it, and therefore the government is bound to support and diffuse religion."\* Sometimes in phrase epigrammatic, thus:—"Religion makes good men, and good men make good subjects; but the

\* These are the words of Dr. Dealtry, and of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

making men good subjects is the end of government, and therefore commonwealths ought to aid and diffuse religion."

These statements we have given as one argument, because, however apparently different, they really involve the same fallacies; and to answer one of them is to answer them all. They may easily be reduced to the following form:—

Governments are bound to promote by all means  
the good of their subjects;

But religion is found to promote it;

Therefore governments are bound to promote  
religion.

Now, to leave unnoticed for the present the first proposition, which, however, is notoriously false, it will be seen that between the terms of the second premiss and what are supposed the terms of the conclusion, there is, really, no logical connexion. They are as essentially distinct as sugar and sugar-bounty, as corn and the corn-laws, as religion and religious establishments. This is the reasoning:—

Governments are bound to promote by all means  
the good of their subjects;

But sugar is found to promote it;

Therefore governments are bound to support monopolies in the sugar trade.



Or, religion is found to promote it ;

Therefore governments are bound to support state-ecclesiastical establishments.

Had this argument been put in its simplest form,—religion is useful, therefore state-ecclesiastical establishments are useful,—it must have been detected ; but words, and the semblance of logic, seem to have misled its supporters into “ dark mountains,” where some of them are still stumbling. Might we venture to convey a friendly admonition, under the authority of a great name, we would remind them, in the simile of Bacon,—that words, the conclusions of logic, are far oftener the masters, or meteor-lights of reason, than its servants or guides.

If, however, it be thought impossible that the advocates of the present system should thus violate the first rules of Aristotle and of common sense, it can then only be concluded, that the first or the second premiss must have been unconsciously changed ; thus :—

Whatever does good to the subject should be endowed and diffused by the government,—a proposition somewhat difficult to establish ;

But religion does good to the public ;

Therefore religion should be endowed and diffused by the government.

Or thus :—

The government is bound to promote, by all means, the good of its subjects ;

But the endowment of religion *by the government* is found to promote it,—a proposition objectionable only as it involves a *petitio principii*, and is altogether at variance with the facts and reasonings of the last chapter ;

Therefore, by the government religion should be endowed and diffused.

In either case, the conclusion is *true in logic*,—that is, is *involved in the premisses* ; but, as every one knows, its very logical correctness makes it useless in a question of facts.

But return we now to the first proposition. Grant it *true*, that the “end of government is the attainment of all the benefits which civil society can yield,”—“that it may promote, *by all means*, the good of its subjects,”—we still think it demonstrable that unity of faith is not attainable, at least by the use of compulsion and temporal sanctions,—that all interference with the religious faith of its subjects is always injurious, and that therefore it should be left alone. But, in truth, it is *false*,—demonstrably unfounded. The end of government can be supposed no other than what men proposed when they entered it ; and that could be nothing but protection, in their civil interests, from such injuries as force only could prevent

or remove.\* But difference of opinions, or denial of opinions, in matters of religion, inflicts no injury upon the person or the property of another, and therefore could require no law. On the contrary, if the question of religious faith were discussed at all, the conclusion must have been, that, as it is an injury to be forced to support what men do not believe, or punished for unbelief,—which, however *sinful*, is no *crime*,—opinions and religious faith should be left alone, and the blessings of religious equality universally diffused. The end of a government is, doubtless, the equal protection and the equal civil rights of its subjects. But state-ecclesiastical endowments are based upon punishment and injustice, and therefore they can never be supposed to have been ratified by any implied consent of theirs. The evils they inflict arise, not from the natural imperfection of human institutions, but from the principles on which they are founded: they contradict the nature and ends for which society itself was framed.†

\* If the old notion of a contract between the governor and the governed be regarded as a fiction, as it now is, the reasoning remains unchanged. All admit that the direct ends of a government are as we have stated them; *how* they came to be regarded as such is a matter of little moment.

† Mr. Gladstone has, indeed, advanced the somewhat novel doctrine,—that the propagation of religion is one of the principal ends of government, as government. An examination of his theory will be found in Note O.

If it be said, in reply, that “commonwealths are not voluntary societies constituted by men, but framed expressly by God, for ends which are as independent of man’s consent as they are above man’s contrivance, and that the diffusion of religion is one of them;” we ask again for proof,—for the record that contains this information. Is it in the volume of scripture that we are told the magistrate must compel all to support what he believes the faith, whether they believe it or no? If it be, we ask for the passage in which we may find this statement. Or, is it in the decisions of reason? Shew us, at least, the arguments and pleadings by which it is supported. For ourselves, we cannot but think that by both the office of the magistrate is confined to the correction of evil *doers*, and the diffusion of the gospel left to the voluntary devotedness of the church.

10. What, then, is the object of civil government? Its object is, to regulate, in accordance with certain well-known principles of justice, the conduct and actions of its subjects, but to leave untouched their feelings and faith.\*

With *feelings* government has no right to interfere: they are under the jurisdiction of conscience,—that

\* Such was the opinion of the primitive church. “All Christians in the ages of the martyrs,” says Campbell, “appear to have agreed in this,—that the magistrate’s only object ought to be the peace and temporal prosperity of the commonwealth.”—*Ecclesiastical History*, Lect. xxv. See Note P.

voice of God within the breast which alone can summon them to plead, whose right alone it is to approve or condemn. Hence, the office of the one and the office of the other—the legal and the moral—are universally admitted to be distinct. Right in law is what a man may *do*; right in morals, what a man may *feel*;—duty in law, what a man must *do*; duty in morals, what a man must *feel*. He may *lawfully* envy, but may not lawfully murder; he may lawfully covet, but may not lawfully steal; he may think libels, but, whether true or false, is forbidden to injure another by printing them; if they do not injure, his thoughts, however malicious, are not libellous at all. His feelings may be treason, and himself be guiltless; if his *practices* are treasonable, he is certainly condemned. In morals, the envy, and the covetousness, and the malice, and the spirit of insubordination, are equally guilty with the overt acts in which they might have ended; but the law takes no cognizance of them. The legal, in fact, is conversant with actions, and actions only; the moral, with feelings, or with actions as the signs of them.

With *opinions* and *faith* government has no right to interfere; its province is the regulation of the doings of men, not the regulation of their thoughts. The only lawful authority they obey is that of reason and truth. In every law of the legislature there is,

doubtless, some opinion involved—at least, the belief of the justice or wisdom of the enactment; but no one is required to express his assent or approval by his obedience. The subject must practise the opinion as legalized; but he is never expected to believe and diffuse it *as true*. Impressed with a sense of the importance of habits of contrivance, a government may legalize dextrous theft, as at Lacedæmon; or, feeling the evils of too dense a population, may sanction infanticide, as in China; or, touched with a love of piety and affection, may allow self-murder, as in Hindostan; or, acting in consistency with the principles of free trade, may withdraw the bounty which had previously encouraged the culture or importation of some article of commerce, or take off the unjust restrictions that a by-gone and ignorant age had imposed. All these practices may be legalized, and the people be bound, if no higher authority forbid, to obey the laws that enjoin them; but if a law be passed to compel men to teach as true or as just, as well as to *practise* as *legal*, the opinions on which these laws of action are founded; if professorships are endowed by the government for the express purpose of explaining and enforcing the truth and justness of them, and the people are taxed towards their support; if I, as a subject, am compelled to tell another that theft, or infanticide, or self-murder, or free trade,



has a stronger claim on our obedience than that of the civil ruler,—even the claim of divine authority or of truth,—the duty of obedience in that one point has ceased. Submission may still be a question of prudence, but it is no longer one of higher obligation.\* In laws that affect the *practices* of men, “the speculative line of demarcation, where obedience ought to end and resistance must begin, may be,” as

\* It is, perhaps, desirable that these statements should be somewhat guarded against misrepresentation and abuse. They are not intended to defend rebellion, but only to advocate the claims of the law of conscience in *matters professedly religious* above the law of the government, and therefore cannot be applied in defence even of passive resistance in matters *purely secular*. If they seem to impeach the frame of our constitution, it is because it has violated this principle, and sanctioned laws which, even as Burke allows, “are null and void.” “No error,” says he, “can be more truly subversive of human society than the position, that any body of men have a right to make what laws they please, or that laws can derive any authority from their institution merely, and independent of the quality of the subject-matter; nor can any argument of policy, or reason of state, or preservation of the constitution, be pleaded in favour of such a practice.” The truth is, as he goes on to observe, the advocates of this unlimited submission to the decision of the civil magistrate are teaching, under a very slight modification, the immoral doctrine of Hobbes, that law is the foundation of morality—a doctrine which even Cicero condemns as unworthy, not to say of a philosopher, but even of an illiterate peasant:—“O rem dignam, in quâ non modo docti, verùm etiam agrestes erubescant! Jam vero illud stultissimum, existimare omnia justa esse, quæ scita sint in populorum institutis aut legibus. Si enim populorum jussis, si principum decretis si sententiis judicium, jura constituerentur; jus esset latrocinari, jus adulterare, jus testamenta falsa supponere, si hæc suffragiis aut scitis multitudinis probarentur.”—*De Legibus*, lib. i. cp. 14—16.

Burke holds, "faint, obscure, and not easily definable," because they are all within the province of legislation, and it is difficult to tell what sacrifice of natural right is really useless or extravagant; but in laws that affect the free exercise of opinion there can be no cause of difficulty and nice calculation, for they are as certainly beyond it.\* To obey them is to sell for the privilege of legal immunity our birth-right, to dethrone reason and truth, and to acknowledge the government of a usurper and a tyrant. Infallibility alone, or the hopelessness of successful resistance, can justify our obedience.

11. "But is it intended," it may be asked, "to apply these statements on the office of government to opinions of every kind? Would you have a Christian state allow the public advocacy of the principles of

\* This distinction may serve to remove prejudices which many excellent persons have entertained against this explanation of the duties of the civil government. They fancy, that because government is excluded from the province of religion, lest, by entering that province, the civil interests of its subjects should suffer, therefore temporal interests are regarded as of more importance than those that are spiritual; but it is not so. The question is, whether an instrumentality which is intended mainly for the promotion of the temporal welfare of men can be employed safely, and without injury to its primary object, for the promotion of their spiritual welfare. A machine and materials that may, with certain adjustments, make good pianofortes, will probably be found to make bad food; and yet no one pretends that bread is of less value than music. *Power* is the only tool of government; and though useful enough in regulating the actions of men, it is eminently worse than useless when it attempts to regulate their faith.

atheism—principles which do away with the sanctity of oaths, destroy the ‘only security of good behaviour’ which men can give to any community, and tend to destroy the very foundation on which the fabric of civil society is built?\* or would you sanction the diffusion of a faith which, like Romanism, is clearly subversive of all temporal power?”

\* Such is the argument of Dr. Rogers, a writer of the last century of very considerable influence:—“Reason,” says he, “tells us, that without religion society would want its strongest cement, and all social virtues their strongest obligations. Those to whom the authority and government of the society should be committed could not but perceive what advantage it would be, in the discharge of their offices, to be assured of the fidelity and duty of their subjects, from principles of conscience and an apprehension of God’s displeasure. And what could be more desirable to the subjects than that their governors, who had no superiors on earth, should acknowledge one in heaven, and be restrained from any injurious abuse of their power by the dread of a Being whom no cunning could elude, no power resist? To every man reason would suggest, that nothing could more effectually promote amongst men that mutual trust and confidence in each other, justice and veracity, which the ends of society require as a presumption that each acted under the awe of a Supreme Being.”—*Vindication of the Civil Establishment of Religion*, p. 28.

The principle involved in the above extract is this:—“To act under the awe of a Supreme Being is the most effectual means of promoting the ends of society;” a principle which few will deny. But when he adds afterwards, that the establishment of some religious system—that is, of any—can alone produce such awe upon the minds of the people, he makes an assertion as inconsistent with common sense as with fact. The first part of his treatise, on “the nature and ends of civil society requiring the establishment of some religion,” illustrates the same views which have lately been advocated by Mr. Gladstone, and goes far to stigmatize all who attempt to introduce Christianity into heathen countries as “sowers of sedition.”

Now, in answer to this question, we can only reply, that the diffusion by fair means of all opinions ought certainly to be allowed, those alone excepted which can be proved directly and confessedly injurious to the persons or property of the citizens, or subversive of government itself. We repeat, "directly" and "confessedly;" for, remotely and by inference, any religious system may be made out to affect, in some way or other, the peace and well-being of all government. This exception, however, it will be seen, includes no sect of Christendom, nor indeed any creed which is consistent with the existence of social institutions. As for those who are supposed so unprincipled and unscrupulous as to teach doctrines which imply at least that oaths are not binding, we would leave them to the laws against perjury; other threatened punishment would be utterly useless, and would always fall upon the wrong person. The unprincipled would deny on oath their infidelity, and profess whatever the government might propose; whilst such as were too honest to save themselves from punishment by falsehood would unjustly suffer. If men be wholly unprincipled they will deny their atheism, and thus escape the penalty; if principled, it would be wrong to punish them. If their opinions can be proved *directly* subversive of government, let them be proscribed; but if they

cannot, it is the duty of the government to "leave them alone."

11. "But are Christian states," it will be asked, "to legislate as if all religious systems were indifferent—as if God had never spoken—as if the "true light" had never arisen and visited the nations—as if the path of truth and "of life" were unknown?" By no means. Such practical latitudinarianism dissenters would be the first to condemn. To forbid a government busying itself in confirming the splendid generalization of science, however, is one thing; to forbid it the use of the sun's beams is another. It may surely live and act as the "child of the day," without compelling its subjects to believe, or taxing them to diffuse, as true, that the diameter of our great luminary is some thousand times longer than that of the earth,—that light is not emitted particles, but the motion of a fluid medium,—that it is vibrated from the sun's atmosphere, not from the sun's volume,—or that the theory of Kopernik is the only one that explains the appearances of the heavens. All these doctrines may be founded in fact; it is possible, even, that laws may be framed on calculations connected with them; but the diffusion of the doctrines themselves, or the compulsory support of them, is wholly beyond the jurisdiction of the civil ruler. And so of the Bible. All states should legislate

consistently with its principles; their laws should ever be in harmony with them;\* but to the record that teaches them, to the ark—the church and the consciences of men—in which they are preserved, there must be put forth no helping, no inpious hand. Their measures should be such as will bear the scrutiny of its light; but the light itself they must neither touch nor feed. Their path should run parallel with the narrow way, but not into it. The moral precepts of the Bible they should regard as their “legum leges”—as the principles of rectified reason, by which all existent laws may be tested and improved; but does it follow that their subjects should be compelled to support a system of doctrine which they are at a loss to find there? May they not forbid murder without enjoining the baptism of infants, or punish theft without branding what they call heresy or weakness? Rulers may legislate in perfect consistency with the gospel, without taxing their subjects in support of any one version of its truths; as easily, in fact, as use the light of day,

\* No one has expressed this distinction more accurately than a very high authority. “Human laws are measures in respect of men whose *actions* they must direct: howbeit, such measures they are as have also their higher rules to be measured by; which rules are two, the law of God and the law of nature; so that laws human must be made according to the general laws of nature, and *without contradiction to any positive law of scripture*, otherwise they are ill made.”—HOOKER’s *Ecclesiastical Politie*, book iii. sec. 9.



without endowing the theory of Newton or the opposite theory of most modern inquirers; as easily as act on the principles of universal justice without teaching with some that they are connate, or with others that they are acquired. They ought to practise truth, but they ought not to diffuse it. The one, we repeat, is within their province, the other is beyond it.

12. "What defence, then," it may be further objected, "can be given of parliamentary grants in aid of the education of the people, of which voluntaries have ever been ready to avail themselves, and of which, therefore, they may be supposed to approve."

The defence and explanation of the conduct of dissenters are obvious. The grants of parliament are in no case grants for the diffusion of opinions, least of all of religious opinions, but bounties for the encouragement and cultivation of the arts; a school grant for the encouragement of the art of reading, whether English or Greek; a medical grant, of anatomy and physic. Opinions are doubtless diffused, just because a man cannot be taught to read without books, or books be written without pages, or pages without paragraphs, or paragraphs without sentences, or sentences, etymologically defined at least, without meaning; but the diffusion of them is no more the

end of the endowment than the importation of Parian marble is the end of a national gallery of sculpture, or the encouragement of the woollen trade the end of a standing army; or if it be, government patronage is unwise and unjust.

It is, of course, not intended to intimate that a knowledge of the art of reading or of anatomy is education,—“a *training up* of the child in the way he should go,”—but it is maintained that it is the only department of education with which a government ought ever to interfere; and even in that department its bounty must be administered with a cautious and an equal hand. Other departments are entrusted to the Christian parent and the Christian church.\*

This principle, which we deem of the very greatest importance, we wish, then, to lay down as broadly and as distinctly as possible. Funds contributed by the people—taxes imposed by the state for the general purposes of government—ought not to be devoted to the maintenance or diffusion of opinions or faith.

\* We must confess, that we regard all schemes of national education with suspicion; not because afraid of knowledge, but partly because we have no great faith in the moral advantages of instruction purely secular, and partly because we feel it to be difficult to apply the principle which we have just laid down to the regulation of the *extent* of government patronage. Would it not be well if our missionary societies devoted more of their funds to the *religious* education of the young?

Be they true or false, on questions of divine science or of human policy, the civil ruler has no right to hinder or to aid them. The sole duty of his office is the promotion of the civil interests,—the safety, health, liberty, and happiness,—of his subjects. His “concernment for men’s souls,” and his “care of the commonwealth,” should agree in teaching him to “leave them alone.”

13. To most of the arguments by which this plain and comprehensive principle is supported there has been already a frequent allusion, and therefore it is only necessary that we repeat them. It is certainly in accordance with the law of nature, which teaches us—that we ought to attain the greatest possible degree of happiness and liberty consistent with the rights of others,—that by state churches these rights are violated,—that the violation of them could not have been sanctioned at the institution of government,—that, if it had been so sanctioned, it would still have been unjust, because, for their thoughts and faith, men are accountable only to God,—and that, even if they be accountable to men, the temporal sanctions of the civil ruler are but little likely to correct them. It is equally in accordance with every precept of reason,—one of whose plainest lessons is, that it is absurd to attempt to force a nation to think with their rulers, in place of thinking in consistency

with what they deem conclusive evidence, iniquitous to compel them to support what they do not believe, execrable to punish them for believing and acting as God has enjoined; and with every decision of prudence and practical wisdom, which stamps with the character of folly every scheme that proposes to win men over to truth, by identifying it with a system of proscription such as none but an angel's nature might bear,—that offers to teach them the “obedience of faith,” by first practising them in rebellion,—that seeks to perpetuate the true liberty of the people by making them submit to mental and moral slavery, and offers to give to government all the security of endowed truth by repeatedly endangering and breaking the public peace,—that thinks to promote the piety of the church by making its ministers dependent upon the most secular of all trusts, or the unity of the church by stigmatizing dissentient sects, whom it first makes dissentient by the establishment of matters left uncertain or indifferent,—that suggests the possibility of adding to the *heartly* supporters of truth by rewarding conformity and punishing conscientious dissent, and of diffusing the truth by taking away its best and most popular evidence, the disinterested, unsuspected devotedness of its friends. With scripture precept and scripture example this principle is equally inconsistent: they teach—that he who receives

the ministers of the cross is to support them,\* not according to legal enactment, but according to the purpose of his own heart,†—that religion is accepted just so far as it is voluntary, when compelled it is an abomination,‡—that the sanctions of the gospel are all of them spiritual and future, not present or temporal,§—that our Saviour himself expressly disowned the aids of the civil power,||—that to Christ only are we accountable for our faith,¶—that he has invested the church with powers amply sufficient for its own management,\*\*—that, in matters of religious duty, Christians are free from every law but that of love, and are to “do nothing of necessity,” nor against their own persuasion,††—that not even apostles have “dominion over their faith,” much less the civil magistrate,‡‡—that the care of men’s souls has been entrusted, not to others, but to themselves; if children, to their parents; and if ignorant or indifferent, to the pity and affectionate labours of the church,§§—and that, as every soul ought to be “subject to the higher powers,” this precept cannot be obeyed so long as

\* Gal. vi. 6; Luke, x. 7, 8.      † 2 Cor. viii. 12; ix. 4—7.

† Isaiah, lxi. 8.      § See page 136.      || See page 138.

¶ James, iv. 12; Rom. xiv. 4; 1 Cor. ii. 15.

\*\* John, xviii. 36; 2 Cor. x. 3—6; Luke, xii. 14; 1 Cor. vi. 4.

†† 1 Cor. vii. 23; Gal. v. 14, 16, 13.

‡‡ 2 Cor. i. 24; 1 Peter, v. 2, 3.

§§ Eph. vi. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 24—26; Phil. ii. 15, 16, &c.

these “powers” enjoin to be believed or practised as true what our own conscience—that is, our belief of the command of a higher authority—has condemned.

In reply, then, to the argument of the advocates of state churches,—that it is the duty of a Christian government to compel its subjects, or any portion of them, to support and diffuse what they do not believe,—it is merely asked, on what law is this duty founded? On the law of the just, or of the expedient, or of the scriptural,—laws essentially consistent, and fancied at variance only through the imperfection of our moral or intellectual faculties? Nature is against it; reason and prudence are against it; the precepts and example of the New Testament are against it. The clear and unanimous decision of them all is, that with religion the magistrate, as such, and in the exercise of the power with which as a magistrate he is invested, has no right to interfere. The regulation of the conduct of the subject is within his province; the regulation of the faith of his subject, founded, as it ever must be, on injustice and persecution, is beyond it.



## CHAPTER VI.

OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PROSPECTS OF THE  
VOLUNTARY SYSTEM.

"I AM not of opinion to think the church a vine in this respect, because, as they take it, she cannot subsist without clasping about the elm of worldly strength and felicity, as if the heavenly city could not support itself without the props and buttresses of secular authority."

MILTON, *Of Reformation in England*, Works, Symmons' ed., p. 17.

"Her foundations are on the holy hills. Her charter is legibly divine. She, if she should be excluded from the precinct of government, may still fulfil all her functions, and carry them out to perfection."

GLADSTONE, *On the State in its Relations with the Church*, p. 4.

"A church I take to be a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God, in such a manner as they judge acceptable to him and effectual to the salvation of their own souls."

LOCKE, *Letter on Toleration*.

"As yet, no state

Beneath the heavens had tasted freedom's wine,  
Though loud of freedom was the talk of all.

For rulers still

Had been of equal mind, excepting few,  
Cruel, rapacious, tyrannous, and vile;  
And had with equal shoulder propped the beast.  
As yet, the church, the holy spouse of God,  
In members few, had wandered in her weeds  
Of mourning; persecuted, scorned, reproached,  
And buffeted and killed; in members few,  
Though seeming many whiles; then fewest, oft,  
When seeming most.

Thrice happy days! thrice blessed the man who saw  
Their dawn! The church and state, that long had held  
Unholy intercourse, were now divorced;

And first, in general, now—for in the worst  
 Of times there were some honest seers—the priest  
 Sought other than the fleece among his flocks,  
 Best paid when God was honoured most ; and like  
 A cedar, nourished well, Jerusalem grew,  
 And towered on high, and spread and flourished fair ;  
 And underneath her boughs the nations lodged ;  
 All nations lodged and sung the song of peace."

POLLOCK, *Course of Time*, book v.

1. HAVING attempted, in the preceding chapter, to prove that the principle of ecclesiastical establishments involves essentially injustice and persecution, and is therefore unchristian ; and that it is utterly repugnant to all right conceptions of the duty and office of the civil magistrate ; it remains that some other principle be put in its place, demonstrably consistent with scripture, and sufficient, under the blessing of the Divine Spirit, to secure the maintenance and ultimate diffusion of the truth.

2. The two main roads of argument that have been traversed and described by the advocates of the existent system are these :—(1) that governments are bound, by "dutiful necessity," by claims of conscience, to the maintenance and propagation of what they deem truth ; (2) they are so bound by claims of calculation and interest. All hold the establishment of religion to be a duty, but not all on the same grounds. Some say, that the ground is scripture and conscience ; others, that it is expediency and national advantage. To the first class belong Hooker, Inglis, and Mr. Gladstone ; to the

second, Warburton, Paley, Coleridge, and Dr. Chalmers.

3. The difference of these lines of argument is of importance, chiefly because of the difference of the practical conclusions to which they lead. The reasonings of Hooker and Inglis, professedly founded as they both are on scripture and divine right, are available only for the support of Christianity; the reasonings of Mr. Gladstone, on the contrary, are equally available for the support of whatever the magistrate himself thinks to be truth; though, in the latter part of his work, he tries to limit the application of them to English episcopacy, by the fiction of apostolical succession. In the theories of Warburton and Paley the established religion ought ever to be the religion of the majority, and of the majority only; whilst, in the theory of Coleridge, a "national clerisy" is all for which he contends, though he is inclined to reckon it a "happy accident" if there be found a "Christian church;" and in that of Dr. Chalmers, his arguments—all of them—go to support the endowment of "evangelical protestantism," of what sect is a matter of no great moment, only, to secure all the advantages of an establishment, it must be the protestantism of *one* sect. It is remarkable enough, that each of these great men has condemned more or less of each theory, his own only excepted. In truth, on almost every

point on which an inquirer might oppose any of their conclusions, he might count on having in his favour the authority of some of the rest.

4. (i.) In the theory of HOOKER the church and the commonwealth are one—a theory founded on mere fiction, and, as Mr. Gladstone has observed, altogether inconsistent with facts. Dissent is *not* rebellion; canons are *not* laws till confirmed by the government; excommunication is *not* banishment; so that the acts of the church are not the acts of the state, nor are they vested necessarily with its authority.

The theory of INGLIS is founded on the examples of the Jewish theocracy, and on the precepts of the New Testament. To these precepts and examples it is not necessary again to refer, the reader will find them quoted and explained in the preceding chapters. To omit every other argument, it is proof sufficient against this theory, that on its principles dissent is idolatry, and toleration, sin.

The treatise of MR. GLADSTONE is remarkable for the grandeur and solemnity of its diction, but by no means for novelty and truth. He holds, that in “fulfilment of his obligations as an individual, the statesman must be a worshipping man. But his acts are public—the powers and instruments with which he works are public—acting under and by the au-

thority of the law, he moves at his word ten thousand subject arms; and because such energies are thus essentially public, and wholly out of the range of mere individual agency, they must be sanctified, not only by the private personal prayers and piety of those who fill public situations, but also by the public acts of the men composing the public body. They must offer prayer and praise in their public and collective character—in that character wherein they constitute the organ of the nation, and wield its collective force. Wherever there is a reasonable agency there is a moral duty and responsibility involved in it. The governors are reasoning agents for the nation in their conjoint acts as such; and therefore there must be attached to this agency, as that without which none of our responsibilities can be met, a religion; and this religion must be that of the conscience of the governor, or none. . . . . For these reasons, then, the *public* profession (and, as he goes on to prove, the public encouragement) of religion ranks among the personal obligations of governors as individuals.”\*

\* *The State, in its Relations with the Church*, chap. ii. § 9. A still fuller explanation of his theory will be found in a subsequent section. “National will and agency are indisputably one, binding either a dissentient minority or the subject body in a manner that nothing but the recognition of national personality can justify. National honour and good faith are words in every one’s mouth. How do they less imply a personality in nations than the

To confute this theory it is only necessary that it be stated in plain language. It holds that the civil magistrate is bound to compel his subjects to support his own faith, however great the number of those who conscientiously reject it; and that he is bound, too, to inflict penalties on all dissentient sects by the introduction of a test law, and the exclusion of them, not only from the offices of the church, but from those of the state; and that such injustice and persecution are necessary duties of the magistrate, not that the people may be instructed in religious truth, but that the "acts of the governing body may be *sanctified*

duty towards God for which we now contend? They are strictly and essentially distinct from the honour and good faith of the individuals composing the nation. France is a person to us, and we to her. A wilful injury done to her is a moral act, and a moral act quite distinct from the acts of all the individuals composing the nation. . . . A nation, then, having a personality lies under the obligation, like the individuals composing its governing body, of sanctifying the acts of that personality by the offices of religion; and thus we have a new and imperative ground for the existence of a state religion." § 19, 20.

If this ground be not more remarkable for its imperativeness than for its novelty, it will prove but little to the purpose; it is, in truth, nothing else than the old argument of the advocates of high-church sentiments expressed in language somewhat more temperate and beautiful. "The magistrate," says Parker, "is empowered to govern the consciences of his subjects. Private persons have no right to judge; they are not masters of their own actions, nor ought they to be governed by their own judgments; but they ought to be directed by the *public conscience* of their governors. If the magistrate impose anything sinful, he, and not the people, is accountable to God for it."



by the offices of religion!" Under the Jewish law, compulsion was *sin*; under the gospel, it seems compulsion is part of our "national sanctification!"

5. (ii.) The reasonings on which Warburton, Paley, Coleridge, and Dr. Chalmers, found their respective theories of the utility of an establishment are sufficiently distinct to require a separate enumeration.

WARBURTON teaches, that civil society, being defective in the regulation of motives and in the sanction of reward, has, in all ages, called in the aid of religion. The state has for its *only* end the security of the temporal liberty and property of man; for its means, coercion. The church, on the other hand, has for its ends the salvation of souls; for its instrument, persuasion and the sanctions of religious truth. In these circumstances, the state needing the sanctions of religion, and the church the protection and power of the state, an alliance is formed between them, having for its object their mutual advantage.

Now the only arguments insisted upon in this theory are,—that the state cannot discharge its duties without the sanctions of religion, nor the church its duties without the powers of the state;—both of which are refuted by facts. The duties of heathen governments have been discharged without receiving help from any one of the *peculiar* sanctions of Christianity, and the duties of the American government are now

discharged without receiving sanctions from any one system of religion; whilst, on the other hand, it is notorious that the duties of the church are more efficiently discharged (in all matters in which Warburton asserts that she needs the aid of the civil power) among voluntaries than in the establishment. It is not true that the church needs the power of the state; nor is it true that the state needs the sanctions of the church.

PALEY founds his theory of a church establishment on its utility; and holds, that as voluntary efforts would be insufficient, a legal provision for the maintenance of state clergy is necessary to the preservation and communication of religious knowledge. The religion of the state should always be that of the majority, not necessarily that of the magistrate, as the chances of the truth of their system are at least as high as those of the truth of any other system.

The theory of COLERIDGE is stated in language of great beauty, though of very imperfect distinctness. He attempts to prove, that "in order to the well-being of the body politic, there must enter into its composition an estate, whose office it shall be to supply those governing and harmonizing qualities of character, without which the remaining elements cannot advantageously cohere"—a theory that goes far to prove the importance of religion, but by no means

the importance of religious establishments. Religion does, doubtless, supply the most powerful elements of union and influence, only it is begging the question in dispute to conclude, that therefore the diffusion of religion is the business, not of the church, but of the government.

The lectures of DR. CHALMERS teach that Christianity is the sure foundation of national prosperity; that individual efforts, without the aid of government, are insufficient to bring it within reach of the whole population; that the division of the country into parishes of commodious extent, with a general care of souls over all persons within them, is the most efficient method of giving to Christianity a general influence; and that such division cannot be effected but by the endowment of one protestant sect.

With the exception of his opinion of what ought to be the endowed creed, it will be seen that the theory of Dr. Chalmers does not differ materially from that of Paley. They both hold that the authority of an establishment is founded upon its utility, and that its end is the maintenance and diffusion of religious truth.

To the fallacies on which these conclusions are founded there has already been occasion to allude. Their advocates take as granted (1) that, because voluntaryism has not yet supplied religious instruction

to the whole population, therefore it is incompetent to do it; and (2) that what cannot be done by voluntary exertion must be done by a government tax, levied even from those who conscientiously disbelieve the endowed faith.

(1) Now, the correctness of both these assumptions dissenters deny. Voluntaryism has not yet evangelized the people, and therefore it cannot evangelize them, is no conclusive reasoning; much less conclusive than the following,—the established church has not yet evangelized the people, and therefore *it* cannot evangelize them; much less conclusive, because she has had longer time to do it, and because whatever has been done by dissent has been done, for the most part, in spite of the church, while all that has been done by the church has been done with the help and co-operation of dissenters. And besides, (2) even if voluntaryism cannot diffuse religion, it can never thence be proved that therefore the government ought to diffuse it, unless it be first shewn, that to diffuse it is essential to the existence of civil society, or that the postponement of the primary ends of government to the secondary, and the introduction of distinctions that involve injustice and persecution, are consistent with the precepts of Scripture and the conclusions of a comprehensive and enlightened experience. From what has been said in

preceding chapters it will be seen that this cannot be shewn. The endowment of religion is not essential to the being of a government, and therefore no reasons of necessity can be urged in its behalf; nor is it essential to its well-being; but, on the contrary, injures alike the commonwealth and the church, making the one suspected, secular, feeble, and, by its injustice, alienating the minds of the subject from the laws and constitution of the other. So that, were it true that voluntarism is incompetent to secure the ends for which God designed it,—were the history of the primitive church, and of the universal diffusion of the gospel in early ages without an establishment, a pure fiction,—and the success of the same principle in America even more questioned than it is,—still the present system, which make men hostile to the government without making them friendly to religion, must be earnestly and justly condemned.

In spite of these facts, however, it is not seldom that the question of an ecclesiastical establishment is put so simply, and yet so sophistically, as “to deceive, if it were possible,” even the most watchful Christian. “Why may not a government,” it is asked, “do what is done by a private person—aid the diffusion of what it deems truth?” It may not, we reply, because it is *not* a private person, but a public body; because, what it does it does in the

name of another, and with the wealth and influence of another, and that, too, not the name and influence of a majority only, but of the whole people ; because what it gives is not its own, but theirs ; because, if it give to one of the sects, it withholds unjustly from the rest ; if it patronize one, it punishes the rest,—punishes them for doing as God has bidden—for reading and judging for themselves,—and thus inflicts injustice and persecution ; because this system is injurious alike to the state and to the church,—promoting tyranny and rebellion in the one, dividing, weakening, secularizing, the other ; because it is repugnant to the express precepts of the New Testament, which teach—that the support of the ministers of the gospel is to be left to them that receive them,—that this support is to be given, not from compulsion, but from love,—that the business of life is sanctified only by the acts of voluntary personal devotedness,—and that the principles of Christ's reign forbid the employment of the sanctions of the temporal power. The question needs no other reply till these objections be completely removed.

6. In denying the consistency of ecclesiastical establishments with the well-being of a government, with the unity and success of the church, with the express precepts and principles of the gospel, it must not be supposed that dissenters think religion a system of



duty and truth that relates to God and the individual only, or that they deem it indifferent whether religion be generally diffused, or “the people be perishing for lack of knowledge.” They hold, on the contrary, that its duties and truths are relative between man and man, and that if they were generally believed and practised they would add unspeakably to the prosperity of the government. “Righteousness exalteth a nation, and sin is a reproach.” But it does not follow that all the subjects of a government should be compelled to diffuse it; much less that they should be compelled to diffuse such a mixture of it with what they believe to be earthy and human as hinders rather than promotes the advancement of truth. Nay more,—they think that, because the laws of religion are of universal authority, its truths of universal application, and their influence on the happiness of the individual and of the nation permanent, therefore they need not the sanctions or the interference of the state. From the essential elements of the Christian character will ever spring up the most powerful impulses to religious devotedness. To believe and to seek to propagate the faith are essentially one. The conversion of the world is at once the business and the privilege of the church.

7. But perhaps it may be most easy to explain the principle of voluntarism by giving what may be

imagined the early history of the diffusion of religion.

Suppose a number of men, holding the same religious opinions, yielding obedience to the same law of religious precept, cherishing the same religious hopes, to reside in the same neighbourhood. Drawn by the attractions of that family affection which the gospel inspires, they become united, and form a voluntary religious society for the double purpose of obtaining mutual instruction and comfort and of propagating their faith. At the moment when the society is formed, and by the very act of its formation, it calls into being a controlling power,—a government,—whose business it is to proclaim the common truth that holds its members in union, and to put in force whatever laws, human or divine, they agree to allow binding upon them. What *form* of government is ultimately adopted is, so far at least as concerns the present question, a matter of indifference. It may be democratical, and each member have on all occasions a voice in the management of the affairs of the community; or oligarchical, and the management of them be entrusted to a few—the elders of the body, men most eminent for piety and wisdom; or it may be an elective monarchy, and the whole control of the body be left with one man, who, first chosen by the

people, exercises irresponsibly the power with which he has been invested—as the *executive*, his own judgment is law.

After an interval of some time, the society may be conceived so multiplied as to be spread over a large extent of country, and it may then become expedient to combine its different branches under one ruling power,—just as some of the free towns of the continent have put themselves, with certain reservations of privilege, under the authority of neighbouring states,—and again representative, episcopal or oligarchical, or monarchical, government may be adopted, as best fitted to promote the ends of their union.

As these offshoots from the parent stem began to multiply in a neighbourhood, it would be natural that they should divide the population of their respective vicinities so as to extend their usefulness. Such a division would be the dictate of the prudence and love which they all professed to regard as their law; and in their respective districts each society would seek to diffuse the knowledge and blessings of their “common salvation;” always remembering, however, that none were to be *compelled* to support its cause, or be punished for refusal. It is thus perfectly conceivable that the whole of a tract of country might be divided,

by mutual consent, into districts or parishes, each with its own labourers and its own church.\*

It might further be expected, as these societies spread, that the churches of one district, being poorer than their brethren, would be more or less dependent upon those of another; and that the one would send, just as did the church at Corinth, to the aid of the rest. These contributions would of course be received in the same spirit that prompted them,—not the spirit of patronage on the one hand and of inferiority on the other, but—in the spirit of devoted and of grateful love.†

It is possible, too, that in these societies would be found individuals who, at their decease, might choose to leave a part of their wealth for the promotion of their general objects, either in the form of principal or of annual payments of interest; in which case, of course, their executors would feel themselves bound to carry out the intentions of the donors, without

\* It is to us inconceivable how Dr. Chalmers should have represented the division of parishes as a blessing peculiar to establishments. The principle has been acted on by voluntaries from the earliest times, and is now acted on in many of our large towns by Christians of all denominations, and with the best possible results. See Note R.

† They that speak with such contempt of churches eking out the contributions of others might do well to study the apostle's principle. 2 Cor. viii. 14—16. Say what they will, the system has all the authority of apostolic approbation.

feeling that their own opinions were at all compromised, or their own consciences offended, by this discharge of their civil duties.

After an interval of two or three generations, it would probably be found that some of these churches, either from preference or from circumstances, had changed their form of government, and possibly some of the less important articles of their faith. These changes, however, would clearly have no great effect upon their general constitution and objects, so long as they left them voluntary associations of Christian people, joined together by mutual affection, for mutual comfort, and for the diffusion and maintenance of their common principles.

All these forms and changes, it will be seen, are indifferent, provided the fundamental rules of the society be observed:—First, that each church be kept in union by oneness of faith and feeling; secondly, that each member belong to the society, and contribute to it just so long as he continues to approve its objects and procedure. The only law is the law in which all agreed at its formation; the only means of maintaining authority those which the members have sanctioned; and, in case of obstinacy, the only penalty—unless others have been added by unanimous consent—expulsion.

Now, it is only necessary to suppose, that the faith

and the precepts thus practically allowed are the faith and the precepts of the New Testament;\* and we have an example of a church formed on the principle of voluntaryism,—a principle supported in all its parts by the authority of apostolic times. If the government of the country, in which we have supposed these societies to have been instituted, were to adopt any one form of church-order or of faith, and compel the advocates of all other forms and creeds to support it, and not them only, but all the inhabitants of the country indiscriminately, we should then have an example of the compulsory principle,—a principle utterly opposed to what has now been given as the only one recognised in the Bible.

7. It will be seen, then, from these explanations of voluntaryism—

That it is perfectly consistent with an organized system of constitution and of effort;

That it interferes neither with church forms nor with church government; neither with the episcopacy of the English church, nor with the oligarchy of synods, nor with the practices of “the conference,” nor with the independency of dissent. It admits them all. But it maintains that none should be expected to support these systems, but such only as approve them.

\* See note D.



That what it condemns is, government compulsion of individual faith and of individual devotedness.

That its principle is, that every Christian man should support what he conscientiously believes most consistent with divine truth, and that for his religious faith he is responsible only to God,—or to men, so far as he has voluntarily submitted himself to their authority.

8. It remains that a few words be said on the sufficiency of this principle, and on the objections that have been urged against it. It has been held to be inconsistent (1) with the independency of the Christian ministry, (2) with the unity of the church, and (3) inadequate for the diffusion of religious truth.

9. The first objection is generally supported by facts raked out of every village and hamlet in the kingdom, illustrative of the tyranny of deacons, of the democratic tendencies of churches, and of the consequent discouragements and degradation of the ministry; facts that prove the existence of evil and of weakness in some quarters, doubtless, but not, we apprehend, in the system itself.

Of these facts, it is probable that the following will be found a sufficient explanation:—

1. They are to be attributed often to carelessness on the part of the church on the admission of members. The church of Christ ought ever to

be a body of "the faithful;" and if even "ungodly men creep in unawares," there must be more or less of "schism in the body," and in the end, perhaps, of subversion of the faith.

2. They are often to be attributed to a forgetfulness on the part of pastors, deacons, and members, of the only rule of procedure allowed under the gospel—the rule of love. The power of affection is the only power with which Christ has invested the church, (excepting, perhaps, the power of rebuke and the power of exclusion; which, however, are rather modifications of the same power than illustrations of a new one;) and wherever additional instruments of government are introduced to the neglect of the only instrument which God has sanctioned, the church must become, in the end, secular and divided. Churches innumerable have been destroyed by the "justice" and the "prudence" of their members. We repeat it: under the gospel, neither "justice" nor "prudence" is law, but love alone.
3. They are often to be attributed to the want of "authority" on the part of the pastor, in urging upon the members of the church the *duty* of keeping in exercise the spirit of the gospel. Dissenting ministers have too often forgotten to "magnify their office." The undue assumptions

of the established church have made them and their members, in some instances, jealous of pastoral influence, even when exercised in its right province. This jealousy must be abandoned, or at least cherished only to keep the Christian pastor from temporal power, and from "dominion over the faith" of his hearers. In correcting the sins of his people, he must keep in due exercise the power of rebuke. The apostolic precept is, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke, with all authority. Let no man despise thee."

4. They are often to be attributed to the influence of the establishment. Those who might have sympathized most with the Christian minister, and whose intelligence and enlightened charity ought to have made them eminent fellow-workers with him, are very generally drawn over to the church, through the medium of the younger members of their families, who are of course warmly alive to the attractions of its respectability and wealth. No persecution can be more severe than that which robs an intelligent ministry of those who

would have been its warmest and ablest friends in any of the thousand difficulties to which a calling so arduous, though so glorious, is exposed; and this is one of the persecutions of the state church.

With these causes constantly in operation, it is unjust to lay to the charge of the system what is attributable solely to the mismanagement of those who work it, or to the imperfections of our nature. The voluntary principle seeks to have an unfettered theology from its ministers, and a voluntary maintenance from the people. The church, it holds, is *not* the master of the ministry, though the ministry is the servant of the church.

10. The *second* objection is founded on the divisions by which the church is unhappily distinguished, and which, it is allowed on all hands, supply strong arguments against our common protestantism, and are a serious hindrance to the progress of religion; and these divisions, it is held, are attributable mainly to the exercise of that "private judgment" on which the whole of the system rests.\*

\* Mr. Gladstone insists strongly on the change which some Presbyterian churches have undergone, as proof of the inadequacy of the voluntary principle to keep up, age after age, the "unity of the faith;" a sentiment penned surely in some hour of utter forgetfulness of the history of the English establishment.

Now, in answer to this objection, it needs only to be remembered,—

1. That the diversities of religious opinion *in* established churches have ever been as wide and as notorious as diversities of opinion *out* of them. There is no more of unity, for example in the English church, than among dissentient sects—there is even less;\* so that, though divisions of religious sentiment be matters of universal confession and regret, it is by no means clear that an establishment or tests can ever remove them.†
2. That whatever be the results of voluntarism, unity of faith is altogether inconsistent with the system of an establishment, in which toleration and imposition are most absurdly combined. There may be unity in the church if all are compelled to submit to her authority; or there may be unity if all may exercise the rightful

\* See note F.

† The Romanist refers to the unity of the Romish church in proof of its divine origin, when, in fact, it is one no more than protestants are. “All are Romanists,” says Dr. Wiseman, “who submit to the teaching and authority of the Romish church; and in that submission see our unity and truth.” So say we: “all are protestants who submit to the teaching and authority of the Bible.” There is therefore as much oneness on this point among protestants as among Romanists. For a history of the unity of the Romish church on other points, see Edgar’s *Variations of Popery*.

privilege of giving to the Bible a prayerful and unprejudiced examination. These are the only two conditions of unity of which we have any conception: the one is found in the Romish church; the other will be found probably in the millennium. But, of the first condition, toleration will not allow; nor imposition of the second. Christians are not *compelled* to submit, nor are they permitted without prejudice to examine; therefore they are not one. Schemes of union have doubtless been framed by churchmen and by dissenters, who admit, more or less, of the claims of the church, but they are all of them impracticable, so long as one sect insists upon it, that all shall be *compelled* to support the religion of her members, and admit “her power to decree rites and ceremonies, and her authority in controversies of faith.” Unity may be founded on Christian forbearance, but never on ecclesiastical assumptions. It is not voluntary co-operation that has divided us, but compulsory support. Let the establishment become a “sister-church,” and speedily sects and denominations will for ever cease!

3. That in no instance has the exercise of the right of private judgment caused divisions, but only the abuse of it,—an abuse that has originated



mainly in the undue assumptions of the state church. It is admitted frankly, that the opinion of the whole church—the *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*—may not yet have received among dissenters the whole of the deference which is due to such interpretations of scripture as have received the sanction of good men; it is admitted, too, that the exercise of the right of men to read the Bible uncontrolled by human authority has sometimes ended in the presumptuous rejection of the authority both of God and of truth; and that, instead of judging of the conclusiveness of the evidence of the Scripture, they have sometimes rashly judged of the reasonableness of its truths; but then, it should be remembered that these evils have resulted rather from the “reluctation of reason” to submit to any but the highest authority, than from any sober defence of its rights; and that, besides, they are as strenuously condemned by dissenters as by the advocates of a state church. The wantonness of private judgment, with all its freaks, is the fruit of past degradation, and will be unknown in a state of intellectual freedom.

11. The third objection on the inadequacy of the system may be easily answered. It is only necessary that we remember—

1. That this question is a secondary one, when once it has been shewn that the *compulsory* system is unchristian and unjust. Voluntaryism has received the sanctions both of reason and scripture, and those must be very remarkable facts that justify the Christian in setting these sanctions aside.
2. That if the system has been found incompetent, its incompetency has been shared, at least to an equal degree, by the opposite system. The catholics of Ireland are not *all* of them converted to protestantism, though for ages not less than two millions a-year have been devoted by the state to that purpose ; nor can the masses of Birmingham be reckoned, with any propriety of terms, among the children of the church. Of course it will be said, in reply, that we must not lose sight of the goodness of the machine in the badness of the working of it, and that the insufficiency of the operation of the establishment is only temporary or local. Perhaps so ; but why deny to the principle of voluntaryism the same plea which the advocate of compulsion so strenuously claims for his own ? Besides, all the objection of insufficiency amounts to is this, people will not give their money for love, and therefore we must needs take it by force.

3. That the conclusion of incompetency is founded on a very partial examination of facts, and not upon any comprehensive view of the history of the church. It is said, for example, that because voluntarism has not converted the world, therefore it can never convert it; that, because Christians, taught as they have been by state churches that the diffusion of religion is no business of theirs, do not yet feel adequately the claims of the world and of the church, therefore they can never feel them;\* reasonings too childish to need

\* The following is Mr. Gladstone's proof of the failure of voluntarism in America:—"It is invidious," says he, "to allude to results; but neither the good neighbourhood of the United States to those whom they touch on the northern frontier, nor the existence and extension of slavery, nor the state of law and opinion respecting it, nor the sentiment entertained in the north towards the black and coloured race, nor the general tone of opinion on religious subjects in society, nor the state and extent of religious institutions under circumstances of great facility, induce us to regret that England does not follow the ecclesiastical principles of the western continent."—Chap. viii. § 37. What would Mr. Gladstone think of such reasoning as the following:—"It is invidious," says an American, "to allude to results; but neither the good neighbourhood of the Canadian provinces, nor the state of Ireland, nor the history of the abolition of the slave trade, nor the celebrated statement of Lord Eldon—that he could not bring himself to believe that trade irreconcilable with Christianity, as the bench of bishops had uniformly sanctioned it by their votes,—nor the sentiments entertained in England toward their catholic fellow-countrymen, nor the state of law and opinion which Mr. Gladstone would have prevalent respecting them, nor the general tone of opinion on religious and moral subjects in society, nor the shameful simony and

a formal refutation. Means amply sufficient are in the possession of Christians; all that is wanted is, the heart to use them. We need not "grants," but grace; not money, but devotedness.

12. Of the fitness of this principle, then, for universal application, there can be no question, but with such as are prepared to impugn the wisdom of the founder of the Christian scheme—to deny the truth of the early history of the church—to prove false the accounts that have reached us of the state of the great American republic—to annihilate the facts that are seen under our own eye, and within our own land. It is certain that voluntaryism had the express sanction of our Saviour and his apostles,—that it changed, in two centuries, the persecuted religion of the poor Christians into the favoured religion of the Roman people,\*—that it has filled America with

gross, interminable abuses of ecclesiastical institutions, induce us to regret that America does not follow the ecclesiastical institutions of the parent-land."

It has not been thought necessary to notice formally a statement often reiterated by Mr. Gladstone—that voluntaryism contradicts the language of the prophet, who describes the gospel as offered "without money and without price." How such a statement came to be uttered by an advocate of a compulsory church, and of the church of Ireland, is inconceivable. Besides, it is not so. Voluntaries seek the maintenance of the gospel by the *voluntary* contributions of *Christians*.

\* "The connexion of the state," says Mr. Gladstone, "with the

churches and ministers under circumstances of great difficulty,\*—and that it has consecrated out of the hard earnings of the “poor and ignorant” voluntaries of England some millions a year to the service of humanity and of religion in addition to the exactions of the state church.† By Christians, a feeling more closely allied to reverence than to contempt will be acknowledged to be the only appropriate one with which they ought to regard a system which has been honoured with such high sanctions, and proved the means, under God, of producing such delightful results. “God is in the midst of it. It shall never be moved—the joy of the whole earth” is this system “of the great King.”

13. Happily for the church and the world, the fate of the principle which has now been under discussion is no longer a matter of calculation or uncertainty. Reason, and common sense, and scripture, are too clearly on its side to allow a moment’s doubt of its ultimate success. What length of time may be necessary to secure for it a greater influence than is now

church under Constantine appears to have been formed, not as the result of ecclesiastical or civil ambition, but after the order (so to speak) of nature, and following the course of events.” The corruptions of Christianity were all (in their development at least) subsequent to this union. If the union did not originate them, it did all that was possible to make them immortal.

\* See note S.

† See note T.

exerted by self-interest and error, it is, of course, impossible to foretel. Twenty years is probably its utmost limit: it may be shortened—by the folly of “the church,” that first stage in the progress of men toward destruction,—or by the outbreking of popular rebellion. Come it must; and upon the zeal and enlightened devotedness of Christians it depends whether it be speedily in peace, or later in tears and in blood. Dissenters condemn as earnestly as possible the agitation of Ireland, and, in case of an appeal to arms, would be the first to repel such weapons, and to rally round the friends of the constitution; but they regret that they are compelled to lay the evils of that agitation to the charge, not of the nation, nor yet, perhaps, of the government, but of the system, while they should despair of success against a righteous cause, supported by illegal means certainly, but still deserving to be supported by six millions of people.

14. But by what means, it may be asked, is the present system of ecclesiastical establishments to be superseded, and the new system introduced and allowed? Ever, we reply, with a just regard for existent interests, and in the spirit of equity and love. Let a parliamentary committee be appointed to inquire into the value and origin of church wealth;



all that has been left to the protestant established church by private persons is her own; let it remain, therefore, untouched. All that has been given by the prerogative of the ruling monarch, or by the votes of parliament, is the nation's, and has been given subject to the annual sanction of the nation's voice. It is given impiously, unwisely, unjustly; let it, therefore, be withheld, and devoted in no case to any religious sect, but to the general objects of government. All that has been left by Romanists for purposes which protestants condemn, let it be given to such as can alone fulfil the intentions of those that bequeathed it; or, if such intentions entail practices illegal and subversive of government, let it go, as is usual in such cases, to the exchequer; it is certainly not the property of the protestant church. Then let all state patronage and state influence cease; let the church become one of ourselves, and speedily the sects will return, one by one, into her bosom, or she will rest in theirs, and the millennium will have begun. "The nations shall walk in her light, and kings in the brightness of her rising. . . . The sons of the stranger shall build up her walls, and their kings shall minister unto her: no longer forsaken and hated, she shall be made an everlasting boast—the joy of perpetual generations."

Such shall be the honours and glory of the church when "violence shall no more be heard in her land, wasting nor destruction within her borders." "For brass she shall have gold, and for iron silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron; for her officers shall be peace, and her exactors righteousness." "In her humility all men, with loud hosannas, will confess her greatness."



## NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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*Note A, p. 5.*

THE following extracts from the works of the most eminent men of puritanical times are of some interest, as they explain the views on toleration that were then in vogue. They are taken from a small treatise on *Toleration disproved and condemned. By a very moderate Hand.* Oxford, 1670.

“I beseech you, therefore, in the name of that great God whom you serve, and who hath hitherto blest you, and for the peace and prosperity of this church and kingdome, to resume and pursue your first thoughts of setting up God and his ordinances as becomes you in a regular way, that our church and the government thereof may be no longer laid waste and exposed to confusion, under the plausible pretence of *not forcing men's consciences*. To put all men into a course of order and uniformity, in God's way, is not to force the conscience, but to set up God in his due place, and to bring all his people into the paths of righteousness and life.”—DR. CORN. BURGESS, *Sermon before the House of Commons*, 1641.

“In a word: God hath many things amongst us that must be protected and maintained, and the matters of God have many adversaries which must be watched and suppressed; for ye beare not the sword in vaine, ye are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Magistrates and ministers have (as ye see) one common style of office, that ye in the place, and we in our function and order, should mind and promote the things of God;

ye by the sword, and we by the word ; you are keepers of both tables, the first and great commandment, as well as the second that is like unto it, both come sometimes, as occasion is, under your cognizance.

“ And ye know what a brand sticks to this day upon Gallio, (though an heathen magistrate,) that he cared not for the matters of the law and worship (according to the law) when question was brought ; no, though there were insurrections and tumults upon that occasion : and for Gamaliel’s counsell, ‘ Refrain from these men, and let them alone ; for if this counsell or this work be of men it will come to nought ; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God :’ though it be found within the Bible, yet it is not of like authority with one of Solomon’s proverbs or maxims of policy ; it hath no otherwise the approbation of God for good than the designe of Pharaoh, or the crafty counsell of Achitophell, which are also recorded in the scripture ; it will not consist with other rules of the word, and it hath been condemned as unsound and unsafe by many godly wise men. Wee have more sure words of scripture out of which we draw the doctrine of the magistrate’s power and duty in the matters of God and religion, than the loose speech of such a neutralist and time-serving politician as Gamaliel was. Go on, therefore, I beseech you, as you began ; take us the little foxes as well as the ravening wolves ; these be they who separte themselves, sensuall, not having the Spirit. They boast indeed (much) of the Spirit, but they manifestly do the works of the flesh. They plead for liberty, but it is licentiousnesse. Liberty of conscience they terme it, but it is liberty of practise that every man may do what is good and right in his own eyes ; they pretend to nothing but piety and godlinesse, and seem as if they would be content if they might but have a bare subsistence in the profession of it. So did the Jesuites to learning, when they first appeared upon the stage ; but when they had once insinuated themselves into the good opinion of princes and states, how well they answered the expectations and requited the kindnesse of those who nursed them up all the Christian world sees and feels to their cost at this day. They

aske but connivance and toleration; but if they once meet in a confluence, and find themselves strong enough to run in a streame, let but a damme be pitched down to restraints or oppose their madnesse, or men follow not on to indulge and gratify their humour, it would soon appeare whether or no they rage, and swell, and get over, or bear down afore them all that should stand in their way. They did seem awhile to cry up the order of parliaments and of the civil magistrate, and have their persons in admiration, but meerly for advantage, that so they may get above all ecclesiastical authority; and when they are once up to their height, what they will do with the ladder they hope to climbe and ascend by is not hard to conjecture; they reckon themselves the wheat in the field, and when once they are ripe, they will easily be content to have all that threshed off by which they received their growth.”—JOHN WARD, *Sermon before the House of Commons*, 1645.

“Though God hath given us glorious victories over our enemies, yet the churches of Christ ly desolate, church reformation is obstructed, church discipline unsettled, church divisions increased. The famous city of London is become an Amsterdam, separation from our churches is countenanced, *toleration* is cryed up, authority asleep. It would seem a wonder if I should reckon how many separated congregations, or rather segregations, there are in the citie; what churches against churches,” &c.—EDWARD CALAMY, *Sermon before the Lord Mayor*, 1645.

“It is your duty, (right honourable,) whom God hath betruſted with great power, to suppress these divisions and differences in religion by your civil authority, as farr as you are able, lest you be accessary unto them. For God hath made you *custodes utriusq. tabulæ*, keepers not of the second table only, (as some fondly imagine,) but of the first table also,—and not only keepers, but *vindices utriusq. tabulæ*, punishers also of those that transgress against either of them, for you are the ministers of God for good, and revengers to execute wrath upon him that doth evil,—Rom. xiii. 4; and God hath deputed you for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well,—1 Pet. ii. 19. There



be some that would blot out halfe your commission, and restraîne this good and evill to civill good, and to evils only against men ; but this is against that general rule—*Non est distinguendum, ubi lex non distinguit.*”—*Ibid.*

“ It was none of the old cause that the people should have liberty, and the magistrate should have no power in all matters of God’s worship, faith, and conscience ; and as it is not the old cause, so it is not a good cause.”—BAXTER’S *Holy Commonwealth*.

“ But then the question will be, seeing there will be difference of judgment and opinion while wee are upon earth, then how, or how far, is this difference of judgment to be permitted ? How, or wherein, may Christians differ from one another in judgment, and yet ought to be tolerated and borne with ? This is, my brethren, a very grave and difficult question ; and to the considering how many places there are wherein the Holy Ghost calls upon us to endeavour to be of one mind, of the same mind, and of the same judgment, it is easier to tell you wherein we may not differ in judgment, and wherein differences may not be tolerated, than to tell you wherein they may. First, therefore, I say, that, as an absolute unity in judgment, that we should all be of the same mind in all things is scarce to be attained in this life, though it be to be endeavoured ; so an universal and absolute liberty of judgment, for every man to differ when he pleaseth and in what he pleaseth, to be of what opinion and faith he will, is not to be endeavoured, if it might be attained ; nor is it to be tolerated or permitted. I know no warrant, no pretence of warrant, for it in all the booke of God : scripture nowhere saith, let every man be of what opinion and of what faith he pleaseth, let every man be left to his own judgment.”—NEWCOMEN, *Sermon at St. Paul’s*, 1646.

“ I might shew how the pastors of the reformed churches (namely, those who were stars of the first magnitude) were against the toleration of anabaptists, libertines, and other sectaries, in their time, and what they did and writ against it : as, Calvin, Zuinglius, Peter Martyr, Philip Melancthon, Zauchius Beza, Knox, Bullinger, Musculus ; as also how in England, in Queen Elizabeth’s days,

learned bishops and godly ministers were against the suffering of many religions in this kingdome: as, Bishop Jewel, Bishop Babington, Bishop Bilson, Mr. Cartwright, and Mr. Perkins, who, in his learned works on Rev. ii. 20, speaks thus:—Every man is not to be left to his own conscience, to teach and hold what doctrine he will; but all such men and women as teach erroneous doctrine by the government of the church are to be restrained. Did I say the archbishops, bishops, deanes, doctors, court chaplains, (for there were some of all these sorts opposed,) hazard the favour of king, nobles, great courtiers, the loss of all their preferments, archbishopricks, bishopricks, deaneries, great liveings, to withstand a toleration; and shall we be afraid?

“ Lets therefore fill all presses, cause all pulpits to ring, and so possesse parliament, city, and whole kingdome, against the sects, and of the evill of schisme and a toleration, that wee may no more hear of a toleration, nor of seperated churches, being hateful names in the church of God. Amen, Amen.”—THOS. EDWARDS, *Gangræn*; pt. i. Lond. 1646.

The following are the opinions of “ the presbyterian ministers of the city of London,” as expressed in a letter to the Westminster assembly, in 1645:—

“ The desires and endeavours of independents for a toleration are at this time extreemly unseasonable and preproperous, for,

“ 1. The reformation of religion is not yet perfected and settled amongst us, according to our covenant. And why may not the reformation be raised up at last to such purity and perfection that truly tender consciences may receive abundant satisfaction, for ought that yet appears?

“ 2. It is not yet known what the government of the independents is; neither would they ever yet vouchsafe to let the world know what they hold in that point, though some of their party have been too forward to challenge the London petitioners, as led with blind obedience, and pinning their souls upon the priest’s sleeve, for desiring an establishment of the government of Christ before there was any modell of it extant.

“ 3. We can hardly be perswaded, that the independents themselves (after all the stirs they have made amongst us) are as yet fully resolved about their own way wherewith they should be concluded, seeing they publish not their modell, (though they are nimble enough in publishing other things;) and they profess reserves and new lights, for which they will (no doubt) expect the like toleration; and so, in infinitum, it were more seasonable to move for toleration when once they are positively determined how far they meane to goe, and where they meane to stay.

“ Their desires and endeavours are unreasonable and unequal in divers regards,

“ 1. Partly because no such toleration hath hitherto been established (so far as wee know) in any Christian state by the civill magistrate.

“ 2. Partly because some of them have solemnly profest that they cannot suffer presbytery, and answerable hereunto is their practise in those places where independency prevails.

“ 3. And partly because to grant to them, and not to other sectaries, who are free borne as well as they, and have done as good service as they to the publick, (as they used to plead,) will be counted injustice and great partiality; but to grant it unto all will scarce be cleared from great impiety.

“ Many mischiefs will follow this toleration; as,

“ Causeless and unjust revolts from our ministry and congregations.

“ The godly painful and orthodox ministry will be discouraged and despised.

“ The whole course of religion in private families will be interrupted and undermined.

“ All other sects and heresies in the kingdome will be encouraged to endeavour the like toleration.

“ All other sects and heresies in the kingdome will safeguard and shelter themselves under the wings of independency; and *some of the independents, in their books, have openly avowed that they plead for liberty of conscience as well for others as themselves.*

“ And the whole church of England in short time will be swallowed up with destruction and confusion !”

In the midst of this general confusion of truth and error, the sects of the independents and baptists advocated boldly sound and scriptural views of the office and duties of the magistrate. As early as 1644, the latter sect “ petitioned parliament to stop all proceedings against them, and for the future to provide, that as well particular and private congregations as publike, should have publike protection ; that all statutes against separatists should be reviewed and repealed ; that the presse should be free for any man that wrote nothing scandalous, or dangerous to the state ; that the parliament should prove themselves loving fathers to all sorts of good men, bearing respect unto all, and so inviting an equall assistance and affection from all.” Besides these “ damnable doctrines,” as Dr. Featley calls them, they held others equally “ tending to carnall liberty, familism, and a medley and hodge-podge of all religions.” They taught, “ that it is the will and command of God, that since the coming of his sonne, the Lord Jesus, a permission of the most paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or antichristian consciences and worships should be granted to all men, in all nations and countryes ; that civill states, with their officers of justice, are not governours or defenders of the spirituall and Christian state and worship ; that the doctrines of persecution in case of conscience (maintained by Master Calvin, Beza, Cotton, and the ministers of the New English churches) is guilty of all the blood of the soules crying for vengeance under the altar.” See *The Dipper Dipt ; or, the Anabaptists Duck’d and Plung’d over Head and Eares at a Disputation in Southwark*, by Daniel Featley, D.D. Lond. 1645. Epistle Dedicatory.

In the profession of faith published by the baptists in 1644, the thirty-eighth article expressly states it as their belief, “ that the due maintenance of the officers aforesaid (pastors) should be the free and voluntary communication of the church, and ought not, by constraint, to be compelled from the people by a forced law.”

It will be found, from an examination of the works of this period, that very much that has been written on the so-called fanatics of the commonwealth, and on the character of the Munster baptists, is altogether unfounded. They merely denied—"the heretics," as Dr. F. calls them—"the right of the legislature to propound and enact laws in matters of religion, and of either house, or any other, to inflict civill punishment for the violation of them." "Their vindication of the royall commission of King Jesus" has been too often misrepresented. They did not deny the authority of the civil ruler, but only his authority in matters of faith. The independents, as will be seen from the preceding extracts, held doctrines as unwelcome to the established church. "We," says the independent General Ireton, as quoted by Mr. Gladstone, "only contend to preserve our natural right in religion, without imposing our opinions upon other men; whereas, our opponents would not be contented unless they might have power to compel all others to submit to their imposition on pain of death."

*Note B, p. 23.*

That tithes are substantially a tax is obvious. This fact is very fully stated in the following passage from Dr. Smith:—

"The revenue of every established church, such parts of it excepted as may arise from particular lands or manors, is a branch, it ought to be observed, of the general revenue of the state, which is thus diverted to a purpose very different from the defence of the state. The tythe, for example, is a real land tax, which puts it out of the power of the proprietors of land to contribute so largely towards the defence of the state as they otherwise might be able to do. The rent of land, however, is, according to some, the sole fund, and, according to others, the principal fund, from which, in all great monarchies, the exigencies of the state must be ultimately supplied. The more of this fund that is given to the church, the less, it is evident, can be spared to the state. It may be laid down as a certain maxim that, all other things being supposed equal, the richer the church, the poorer must necessarily be either the sove-

reign on the one hand, or the people on the other; and, in all cases, the less able must the state be to defend itself. In several protestant countries, particularly in all the protestant cantons of Switzerland, the revenue which anciently belonged to the Roman-catholic church, the tythes and church lands, has been found a fund sufficient, not only to afford competent salaries to the established clergy, but to defray, with little or no addition, all the other expenses of the state. The magistrates of the powerful canton of Berne, in particular, have accumulated out of the savings from this fund a very large sum, supposed to amount to several millions, part of which is deposited in a public treasure, and part is placed at interest in what are called the public funds of the different indebted nations of Europe, chiefly in those of France and Great Britain.”—*Wealth of Nations*, book v. chap. 1.

The influence of small revenues is thus stated by the same writer:—

“ Where the church benefices are all nearly equal, none of them can be very great; and this mediocrity of benefice, though it may no doubt be carried too far, has, however, some very agreeable effects. Nothing but exemplary morals can give dignity to a man of small fortune. The vices of levity and vanity necessarily render him ridiculous, and are, besides, almost as ruinous to him as they are to the common people. In his own conduct, therefore, he is obliged to follow that system of morals which the common people respect the most. He gains their esteem and affection by that plan of life which his own interest and situation would lead him to follow. The common people look up to him with that kindness with which we naturally regard one who approaches somewhat to our own condition, but who, we think, ought to be in a higher. Their kindness naturally provokes his kindness. He becomes careful to instruct them, and attentive to assist and relieve them. He does not even despise the prejudices of people who are disposed to be so favourable to him, and never treats them with those contemptuous and arrogant airs which we so often meet with in the proud dignitaries of opulent and well-endowed churches. The



presbyterian clergy, accordingly, have more influence over the minds of the common people than perhaps the clergy of any other established church."—*Ibid.*

*Note C, p. 50.*

The practice of the early Christians in supporting their pastors is thus described by our own Milton :—

“ The primitive church thought it no shame to receive all their maintenance as the alms of their auditors ; which they who defend tithes—as if it made for their cause, whereas it utterly confutes them—omit not to set down at large, proving to our hands, out of Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, and others, that the clergy lived at first upon the mere benevolence of their hearers, who gave what they gave, not to the clergy, but to the church, out of which the clergy had their portions given them in baskets, and were thence called sportularii,—basket-clerks ; that their portion was a very mean allowance, only for a bare livelihood, according to those precepts of our Saviour, Matt. x. 7, &c. ; the rest was distributed to the poor. They cite also, out of Prosper, the disciple of St. Austin, that such of the clergy as had means of their own might not without sin partake of church maintenance, not receiving thereby food which they abound with, but feeding on the sins of other men ; that the Holy Ghost saith of such clergymen, they eat the sins of my people ; and that a council at Antioch in the year 340 suffered not either priest or bishop to live on church maintenance without necessity. Thus far titlers themselves have contributed to their own confutation, by confessing that the church lived primitively on alms.”—*The Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church.* Works, Symmons' ed., p. 381.

The same fact is stated in the fifth book of Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticæ*,—on this question an unexceptionable authority.

Of the sufficiency of these voluntary offerings for the support of the clergy the following passage is conclusive :—“ If any one is desirous to know what part of the church revenues was anciently most serviceable and beneficial to the church, he may be informed from St. Chrysostom and St. Austin, who gave the greatest com-

mentation to the offerings and oblations of the people, and seem to say that the church was never better provided than when her maintenance was raised chiefly from them, for then men's zeal prompted them to be very liberal in their daily offerings; but as lands were settled on the church their zeal sensibly abated, and so the church came to be worse provided for under the notion of growing richer; which is the thing which St. Chrysostom complains of in his own times, when the ancient revenues arising from oblations were in a great measure sunk, and the church, with all her lands, left in a worse condition than she was before; for now her ministers were forced to submit to secular cares, to the management of land and houses, and the business of buying and selling, for fear the orphans, and virgins, and widows of the church should starve. He exhorts the people, therefore, to return to their ancient liberality of oblations, which would at once ease the ministry of all such cares, and make a good provision for the poor, and take off all the little scoffs and objections that some were so ready to make and cast upon the clergy, that they were too much given to secular cares and employments, when, indeed, it was not choice, but necessity, that forced them to it. There are," says he, "in this place, (Antioch,) by the grace of God, a hundred thousand persons that come to church. Now, if every one of these would but give one loaf of bread daily to the poor, the poor would live in plenty; if every one would contribute but one halfpenny no man would want; neither should we undergo so many reproaches and derisions, as if we were too intent upon our possessions." By this discourse of Chrysostom's it plainly appears that he thought the oblations of the people in populous cities, when men acted with their primitive zeal, was a better provision for the clergy than even the lands and possessions of the church. And St. Austin seems to have had the same sense of this matter; for Possidius tells us, in his Life, that when he found the possessions of the church were become a little invidious, he was used to tell the laity, "that he had rather live upon the oblations of the people of God than undergo the care and trouble of those possessions; and that he was ready to part with them, provided all the servants and ministers

of God might live as they did under the Old Testament, when, as we read, they that served at the altar were made partakers of the altar.”—Bingham, book v. chap. iv. § 15. The revenues of the early church were raised partly, and mainly, from the voluntary offerings of the people, and from bequests; afterwards from grants out of the imperial revenues; from the estates of martyrs and clergymen who died without heirs, and from heathen temples, which were sometimes given to the church. All disreputable means of augmenting its revenues, however, were forbidden. They always, says Bingham, observed the apostle’s rule,—“ Let their moderation, τὸ ἐπιεικὲς, their equity, be known unto all men; not doing any hard thing for lucre’s sake; not taking advantages by rigour of law, when conscience and charity were against them.”

The following is a specimen of the authorities by which the statements of Bingham are supported :—“ Modicum unus quisque stipem menstruâ die, vel quum velit, et si modò velit et si modò possit, apponit; nam nemo compellitur, sed sponte confert.”—*Tertulliani Apol.*, chap. xxxix. No one can wish a clearer exposition of voluntaryism that is thus given.

*Note D, p. 57.*

*Of the right and abuse of private judgment.*

The right of private judgment has generally been regarded by protestants as one of the rights first exercised for centuries at the Reformation, and as one founded on the supremacy of the Scriptures. Both these conclusions are mistakes. Private judgment has nothing to do either with the Scripture or with the Reformation, and has been lawfully exercised in Roman-catholic countries, where both are unknown.

Romanism is an assertion of the supremacy of the *Romish church*; protestantism is an assertion of the supremacy of the *Bible*. “The Romanist,” as Dr. Wiseman explains, “is he who yields submission to the teaching and authority of his church;” the protestant, who yields submission to the teaching and authority of the Bible: the first exercising his judgment in interpreting the

language of his spiritual guides ; the second, in interpreting immediately the language of God. By both the *right* of private judgment is allowed.

The abuse of private judgment is also identical in both systems. Private judgment is abused, in the opinion of the *Romanist*, when a Romanist rejects the decisions of the church because of their supposed unreasonableness ; and in the opinion of the *protestant*, when a protestant, because of *their* supposed unreasonableness, rejects the statements of the Bible. Both believe their guides to be divine ; and the right of private judgment is abused when authority, thus held to be divine and conclusive, is submitted to the decisions of imperfect reason. Both admit the right of reason to examine the evidences of the divine origin of each guide, and both deny the right of reason when once their evidences are admitted to sit in judgment on their authority.

By whom, then, it will be asked, is the right of private judgment denied, and by whom abused ? This right is *denied* practically by the Romanist who inflicts penalties, temporal or spiritual, on such as reject the authority of the church, or on such as differ from him in their interpretation of her authority, which they still continue to acknowledge ; and by the protestant, who claims for the church any authority to add to the Bible, or who inflicts penalties, directly or indirectly, on such as differ from him in their interpretations of it ; and it is *abused* by the Romanist who compels the decisions of the church, and by the protestant who compels the decisions of the Bible, to defer to the fancied conclusions of his own reason. We repeat it ; neither Romanism nor protestantism originated the right of private judgment, or denies it ; they both allow an examination of the evidences and of the meaning of the highest authority ; the only difference between the two systems being, that the one holds that the highest authority is the Bible, the other, that it is the church.

By whom, then, is this right denied ? it is again asked ; and we again answer, by the protestant, when the authority of the Bible, or any interpretation of the Bible, is supported by anything more than *evidence* ; and by the Romanist, when he seeks to support, by any-

thing more than *evidence*, the authority of the church, or any interpretation of the decisions of the church. The denial of this right, therefore, is involved in all the temporal sanctions which religion receives from the civil ruler. He says authoritatively to the subject, "You may examine the evidence of the authority of the church or of the Bible, (as the case may be,) and judge of the justness of my interpretations of their language; but if you reject either the one or the other, you know the result."

That we have stated accurately the prominent principles of Romanism and protestantism may be seen from Dr. Wiseman's *Lectures on the Doctrines and Practices of the Roman-catholic Church*, Lecture iii.; and from the first volume of D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation*. Both Mr. Newman and Mr. Gladstone have misrepresented the opinions of dissenters on private judgment. They do *not* put reason above scripture, nor do they condemn the faith of the catholic church as of no moment in determining the meaning of scripture; they give it, on the contrary, all the weight which is due to the opinion of those who are likely on any point to be competent judges. Their reverence of the Bible, and their sense of individual responsibility, forbid them to give more.

It will be observed, that throughout it has been implied that the submission of human reason and of human passions is the grand object of religion; its very purpose is restraint and government; only what we maintain is, that all temporal sanctions—all establishments, in fact, Romanist and protestant—seek to subdue reason to the authority of force, not to the authority of truth; to govern the will otherwise than by means of the will; to induce men to act, not consistently with their better reason, but (so long as they *dissent*) against it; and hence they fail in their object. The following extract from Guizot is a beautiful explanation of the rule of the apostle, that the church should judge and rule all who willingly acknowledge her authority, but should leave "them without, unjudged:—"Quand elles (les religions) agissent par des moyens extérieurs, par la force, la séduction, par les moyens, en un mot, étrangers au libre concours de l'homme, elles le traitent comme on

traite l'eau, le vent, comme une force toute matérielle ; elles ne vont point à leur but ; elles n'atteignent et ne gouvernent point la volonté. Pour que les religions accomplissent réellement leur tâche, il faut que l'homme se soumette, mais volontairement, librement, et qu'il conserve sa liberté au sein de sa soumission. C'est là le double problème que les religions sont appelées à résoudre.

“Elles l'ont trop souvent méconnu ; elles ont considéré la liberté comme obstacle et non comme moyen ; elles ont oublié la nature de la force à laquelle elles s'adressaient, et se sont conduites avec l'âme humaine comme avec une force matérielle. . . . Si les religions s'étaient bien rendu compte de leurs moyens d'action, si elles ne s'étaient pas laissées entraîner à une pente naturelle, mais trompeuse, elles auraient vu qu'il faut garantir la liberté pour la régler moralement ; que la religion ne peut, ne doit, agir que par des moyens moraux ; elles auraient respecté la volonté de l'homme en s'appliquant à la gouverner. Elles l'ont trop oublié et le pouvoir religieux a fini par en souffrir lui même aussi bien que la liberté.”—VI<sup>e</sup> *Leçon*.

*Note E, p. 61.*

The whole income of the English church it is impossible to ascertain at present with any degree of certainty ; the annual worth of livings in the diocese of Norwich alone is not less than 265,000*l.* ; while as much as 665,000*l.* is received for church-rates in England and Wales. In Ireland, the income of the church is, according to the lowest return, 800,000*l.* ; or, according to other calculations, all of them by churchmen, nearly 2,000,000*l.* In England, the lowest estimate is 3,500,000*l.* ; or, according to other calculations, also by churchmen, 9,000,000*l.*

The history of this wealth is curious : it is most of it of popish origin, and intended for popish purposes. Into these details, however, there is no occasion to enter, as the reasonings of voluntaryism are altogether independent of them. What it takes as granted is,



that whatever has been given by the state is given still; that national tithes are merely another form of an annual parliamentary grant.

*Note F, p. 91.*

No claim is more ridiculous than that which arrogates for establishments the advantages of unity of faith: of all churches, the established have ever exhibited a diversity of religious opinions, the more injurious that it has been kept up under shew of subscription to professedly the same creed. The truth of the following statements from the paper of no unfavourable judge is too notorious to require any lengthened illustration:—

“To what extent does the church of England allow of the right of private judgment? What degree of authority does she claim for herself in virtue of the apostolical succession of her ministers? Mr. Gladstone, a very able and honest man, takes a view of this matter widely differing from the view taken by others, whom he will admit to be as able and as honest as himself. People, who altogether dissent from him on this subject, eat the bread of the church, preach in her pulpits, dispense her sacraments, confer her orders, and carry on that apostolical succession, the nature and importance of which, according to him, they do not comprehend. Is this unity? is this truth?

“It will be observed, we are not putting cases of dishonest men, who, for the sake of lucre, falsely pretend to believe in the doctrines of an establishment. We are putting cases of men as upright as ever lived, who, differing on theological questions of the highest importance, and avowing that difference, are yet priests and prelates of the same church. We therefore say, that on some points which Mr. Gladstone himself thinks of vital importance, the church has either not spoken at all, or, what is for all practical purposes the same thing, has not spoken in language to be understood even by honest and sagacious divines. The religion of the church of England is so far from exhibiting that unity of doctrine which Mr. Gladstone represents as her distinguishing glory, that it is, in

fact, a bundle of religious systems without number. It comprises the religious system of Bishop Toinline, and the religious system of John Newton, and all the religious systems which lie between them ; it comprises the religious system of Mr. Newman, and the religious system of the Archbishop of Dublin, and all the religious systems which lie between them. All these different opinions are held, avowed, preached, printed, within the pale of the church, by men of unquestioned integrity and understanding."—*Edinburgh Review* for April, 1839, p. 270.

For a history of the boasted unity of the Romish church, see Edgar's *Variations of Popery* ; and for a history of true unity, preserved uninterrupted for ages, and without the safeguard of an establishment, see Faber's *Inquiry into the History and Theology of the Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*. With all their divisions there has ever been more unity of faith among the sects than in the church. They have less of uniformity, but more of substantial oneness ; they are divided in appearance, they are one in fact.

*Note G, p. 96.*

*Of the power of the government over the established creed.*

Much has been urged against voluntaryism, as if it were insufficient to preserve the faith of the church, whilst, in fact, it is much more sufficient than establishments. There is scarcely a country in Europe in which the established creed has not been avowedly and publicly changed ; and, on the other hand, there is scarcely a country in Europe in which "the faith" has not been maintained by some sect in spite of the church. Take our own country. Henry VIII. found Romanism established ; through caprice, or pride, or unhallowed passion, Romanism and the state were divorced, and an alliance got up between Henry and Anna Bullen—between the state and the creed of the reformers. Under Mary, protestantism was repudiated and persecuted ; under Elizabeth, restored ; under Cromwell, rejected, whilst presbyterianism was forced

into its place, to be again removed for the "new faith." The history of northern Europe abounds with similar changes, and all prove that the established creed has ever been under the control of the government. The history of the established church, and the modifications of faith from orthodoxy to Arianism, which it successively admitted during the earlier ages of Christianity, are too well known to be repeated.

*Note II, p. 98.*

*Of the power of the people in modifying the creed of the church.*

Archbishop Whately has shewn, with great clearness, how human nature has modified the Romish system. Quite independent of the tendency of the established sect to adopt its religious instructions to the popular creed, as the Jesuits adapted Romanism to the dogmas of the Chinese, there is an influence exerted imperceptibly by the people over the articles and practices of the church. As Archbishop Whately observes, and has so ably shewn, the established creed has ever been, more or less, the creed of unsanctified nature.

"It is, indeed," says he, "in all cases profitable to contemplate the errors of other men, if we do this 'not high-minded, but fearful;' not for the sake of uncharitable triumph, but with a view to self-examination; even as the Corinthians were exhorted by their apostle to draw instruction from the backslidings of the Israelites, which were recorded, he says, for their admonition, to the intent that they might not fall into corresponding sins, and that 'he who thought he stood might take heed lest he fell.' In all cases, I say, some benefit may be derived from such a contemplation of the faults of others; but the errors of the Romanists, if examined with a view to our own improvement, will the more effectually furnish this instruction, inasmuch as these errors more especially will be found to be the natural and spontaneous growth of the human heart; they are not so much the effect as the cause of the Romish system of religion. The peculiar character of Romanism, in this respect, will be best

perceived by contrasting it with Mahometism. This latter system was framed, and introduced, and established, within a very short space of time, by a deliberately designing impostor, who did, indeed, most artfully accommodate that system to man's nature, but did not wait for the gradual and spontaneous operation of human nature to produce it. He reared at once the standard of proselytism, and imposed upon his followers a code of doctrines and laws ready framed for their reception. The tree which he planted did indeed find a congenial soil ; but he planted it at once, with its trunk full-formed and its branches displayed. The Romish system, on the contrary, rose insensibly, like a young plant from the seed, making a progress scarcely perceptible from year to year, till at length it has fixed its root deeply in the soil, and spread its baneful shade all around.

‘ Infecunda quidem sed læta et fortia surgunt  
Quippe solo natura subest.’

It was the natural offspring of man's frail and corrupt character, and it needed no sedulous culture. No one, accordingly, can point out any precise period at which this ‘mystery of iniquity’—the system of Roman corruptions—first began, or specify any person who introduced it. No one, in fact, ever did introduce any such system ; the corruptions crept in one by one ; originating, for the most part, with an ignorant and depraved *people*, but connived at, cherished, consecrated, and successively established, by a debased and worldly-minded ministry, and modified by them just so far as might best favour the views of their profligate ambition. . . . The corruptions of the Romish church were the natural offspring of human passions, not checked and regulated by those who ought to have been ministers of the gospel, but who, on the contrary, were ever ready to indulge and encourage men's weakness and wickedness, provided they could turn it to their own advantage ”—*Errors of Romanism*, pp. 11, 12.

And so it must ever be where the clergy are at all under the influence of the people or of the state, instead of being under the control of the church. The same fact is acknowledged both by

Warburton and Mr. Gladstone, though, of course, under very different colouring, and in very different terms.

*Note I, p. 115.*

The following extract from an admirable sermon of Bishop Hoadley's, preached when rector of St. Peter's-Poor, illustrates the explanation which has been given of Rom. xiii. 1 :—

“ Let them,” says he, “ who exalt the executive powers above all laws, and above the very end of that office for which they were instituted,—let them learn from the apostle's practice, which is certainly the best interpreter of his own doctrine, and that of his master and fellow apostles, that when he saith there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God; and that when his great Master acknowledges the power of Pilate to be from above, no more can be meant than that it was agreeable to God's will that *some persons should be invested with power for the good of humane society*; not that God had made them uncontrollable in acting against his commission, and to the ruine of their fellow-creatures.”—Page 9.

The same doctrine is explained and enforced with great clearness in a sermon preached on this text in 1705; which is also remarkable as the origin of an able treatise, by the same writer, on *Submission to the Civil Magistrate*.

In his *Common Rights of the Subject Defended*, he has refuted Warburton's distinction of penalties into such as are penal and such as merely defensive, p. 225.

*Note K, p. 120.*

The words in the text may sound harshly to the ear of one unread in ecclesiastical history, but they are literally consistent with facts. No established clergy have ever been, as a body, influenced by conscientious views. Of 9400 beneficed clergymen who held livings on the death of Mary, only 189 retired from the

church on the establishment of protestantism under Elizabeth. During the other religious changes of those times the profligacy of the clergy was scarcely less flagrant.

*Note L, p. 139.*

The interpretation of John, xviii. 36, which is here given, is supported by the authority of most of the great names in theology of modern and ancient times. The following extract is taken from the celebrated sermon of Bishop Hoadley on this text. His sentiments were at first received with violent opposition, but are now very generally admitted to be scriptural.

“(i.) As the church of Christ is the kingdom of Christ, he himself is king; and in this it is implied, that he is himself the sole lawgiver to his subjects, and himself the sole judge of their behaviour, in the affairs of conscience and eternal salvation. And in this sense, therefore, his kingdom is not of this world; that he hath in these points left behind him no visible humane authority; no vicegerents, who can be said properly to supply his place; no interpreters, upon whom his subjects are absolutely to depend; no judges over the consciences or religion of his people. For if this were so, that any such absolute vicegerent authority, either for the making new laws or interpreting old ones, or judging his subjects in religious matters, were lodged in any men upon earth, the consequence would be, that what still retains the name of the church of Christ would not be the kingdom of Christ, but the kingdom of those men vested with such authority; for whoever hath such an authority of making laws is so far a king, and whoever can add new laws to those of Christ, equally obligatory, is as truly a king as Christ himself is; nay, whoever hath an absolute authority to interpret any written or spoken laws, it is he who is truly the lawgiver to all intents and purposes, and not the person who first wrote or spoke them.

“In humane society the interpretation of laws may, of necessity, be lodged, in some cases, in the hands of those who were not origi-



nally the legislators. But this is not absolute, nor of bad consequence to society, because the legislators can resume the interpretation into their own hands, as they are witnesses to what passes in the world, and as they can and will sensibly interpose in all those cases in which their interposition becomes necessary; and therefore they are still properly the legislators. But it is otherwise in religion, or the kingdom of Christ. He himself never interposeth, since his first promulgation of his law, either to convey infallibility to such as pretend to handle it over again, or to assert the true interpretation of it amidst the various and contrary opinions of men about it. If he did certainly thus interpose, he himself would still be the legislator; but as he doth not, if such an absolute authority be once lodged with men, under the notion of interpreters, they then become the legislators, and not Christ, and they rule in their own kingdom, and not in his.

“It is the same thing as to rewards and punishments to carry forward the great end of his kingdom. If any, then, upon earth have a right to add to the sanctions of his laws,—that is, to increase the number or alter the nature of the rewards and punishments of his subjects in matters of conscience or salvation,—they are so far kings in his stead, and reign in their own kingdom, and not in his. So it is whenever they erect tribunals, and exercise a judgment over the consciences of men, and assume to themselves the determination of such points as cannot be determined but by one who knows the hearts; or, when they make any of their own declarations or decisions to concern and affect the state of Christ’s subjects with regard to the favour of God, this is so far the taking Christ’s kingdom out of his hands and placing it in their own.

“If, therefore, the church of Christ be the kingdom of Christ, it is essential to it that Christ himself be the sole lawgiver and sole judge of his subjects in all points relating to the favour or displeasure of Almighty God; and that all his subjects, in what station soever they may be, are equally subjects to him, and that no one of them any more than another hath authority either to make new laws for Christ’s subjects, or to impose a sense upon the

old ones, which is the same thing ; or to judge, censure, or punish the servants of another master, in matters relating purely to conscience or salvation. If any person hath any other notion, either through a long use of words with inconsistent meanings, or through a negligence of thought, let him but ask himself whether the church of Christ be the kingdom of Christ or not ; and if it be, whether this notion of it doth not absolutely exclude all other legislators and judges in matters relating to conscience or the favour of God, or whether it can be his kingdom if any mortal man have such a power of legislation and judgment in it. This inquiry will bring us back to the first, which is the only true account of the church of Christ, or the kingdom of Christ, in the mouth of a Christian,—that it is the number of men, whether small or great, whether dispersed or united, who truly and sincerely are subjects to Jesus Christ alone, as their lawgiver and judge, in matters relating to the favour of God and their eternal salvation.

“(ii.) The next principal point is, that if the church be the kingdom of Christ, and this kingdom be not of this world, this must appear from the nature and end of the laws of Christ, and of those rewards and punishments which are the sanctions of his laws. Now, his laws are declarations relating to the favour of God in another state after this : they are declarations of those conditions to be performed in this world on our part, without which God will not make us happy in that to come ; and they are almost all general appeals to the will of that God ; to his nature, known by the common reason of mankind ; and to the imitation of that nature, which must be our perfection. The keeping his commandments is declared the way to life, and the doing his will the entrance into the kingdom of heaven. The being subjects to Christ is to this very end, that we may the better and more effectually perform the will of God. The laws of this kingdom, therefore, as Christ left them, have nothing of this world in their view, no tendency either to the exaltation of some in worldly pomp and dignity, or to their absolute dominion over the faith and religious conduct of others of his

subjects, or to the erecting of any sort of temporal kingdom under the covert and name of a spiritual one.

“ The sanctions of Christ’s laws are rewards and punishments. But of what sort? Not the rewards of this world; not the offices or glories of this state; not the pains of prisons, banishments, fines, or any lesser or more moderate penalties; nay, not the much lesser negative discouragements that belong to human society. He was far from thinking that these could be the instruments of such a persuasion as he thought acceptable to God. But, as the great end of his kingdom was to guide men to happiness, after the short images of it were over here below, so he took his motives from that place where his kingdom first began, and where it was at last to end, from those rewards and punishments in a future state which had no relation to this world; and, to shew that his kingdom was not of this world, all the sanctions which he thought fit to give to his laws were not of this world at all.

“ St. Paul understood this so well, that he gives an account of his own conduct, and that of others in the same station, in these words—‘ Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men;’ whereas, in too many Christian communities, since his days, if some, who profess to succeed him, were to give an account of their own conduct, it must be in quite a contrary strain—‘ Knowing the terrors of this world, and having them in our power, we do not persuade men, but force their outward profession against their inward persuasion.’

“ Now, whenever this is practised, whether in a great degree or a small, in that place there is so far a change from a kingdom which is not of this world to a kingdom which is of this world. As soon as ever you hear of any of the engines of this world, whether of the greater or the lesser sort, you must immediately think that then and so far the kingdom of this world takes place. For, if the very essence of God’s worship be spirit and truth; if religion be virtue and charity, under the belief of a supreme Governor and Judge; if true, real faith cannot be the effect of force; and if there can be no

reward where there is no willing choice, then, in all or any of these cases, to apply force or flattery, worldly pleasure or pain, is to act contrary to the interests of true religion, as it is plainly opposite to the maxims upon which Christ founded his kingdom, who chose the motives which are not of this world to support a kingdom which is not of this world. And, indeed, it is too visible to be hid, that wherever the rewards and punishments are changed from future to present, from the world to come to the world now in possession, there the kingdom founded by our Saviour is, in the nature of it, so far changed, that it is become in such a degree what he professed his kingdom was not,—that is, of this world,—of the same sort with other common earthly kingdoms, in which the rewards are worldly honours, posts, offices, pomp, attendance, dominion; and the punishments are, prisons, fines, banishments, galleys, and racks, or something less of the same sort.

“ If these can be the true supports of a kingdom which is not of this world, then sincerity and hypocrisy, religion and no religion, force and perswasion, a willing choice and a terrified heart, are become the same things; truth and falsehood stand in need of the same methods to propagate and support them; and our Saviour himself was little acquainted with the right way of increasing the number of such subjects as he wished for. If he had but at first enlightened the powers of this world as he did St. Paul, and employed the sword which they bore, and the favours they had in their hands, to bring subjects into his kingdom, this had been an expeditious and an effectual way, according to the conduct of some of his professed followers, to have had a glorious and extensive kingdom, or church. But this was not his design, unless it could be compassed in quite a different way.

“ And, therefore, when you see our Lord in his methods so far removed from those of many of his disciples; when you read nothing in his doctrine about his own kingdom, of taking in the concerns of this world, and mixing them with those of eternity; no commands that the frowns and discouragements of this present state should in

any case attend upon conscience and religion ; no rules against the inquiry of all his subjects into his original message from heaven ; no orders for the kind and charitable force of penalties or capital punishments to make men choose and think aright ; no calling upon the secular arm, whenever the magistrate should become Christian, to enforce his doctrines, or to back his spiritual authority ; but, on the contrary, as plain a declaration as a few words can make, that his kingdom is not of this world ; I say, when you see this from the whole tenour of the gospel, so vastly opposite to many who take his name into their mouths, the question with you ought to be,—Whether he did not know the nature of his own kingdom, or church, better than any since his time ? Whether you can suppose he left any such matters to be decided against himself and his own express professions ? And whether, if an angel from heaven should give you any account of his kingdom contrary to what he himself hath done, it can be of any weight or authority with Christians ?

“ From what hath been said, it is very plain, in general, that the grossest mistakes in judgment about the nature of Christ’s kingdom, or church, have arisen from hence,—that men have argued from other visible societies, and other visible kingdoms of this world, to what ought to be visible and sensible in his kingdom.

“ From what hath been said, it appears that the kingdom of Christ, which is the church of Christ, is the number of persons who are sincerely and willingly subjects to him, as Lawgiver and Judge, in all matters truly relating to conscience or eternal salvation.

“ This will be another observation,—that it evidently destroys the rule and authority of Jesus Christ, as king, to set up any other authority in his kingdom, to which his subjects are indispensably and absolutely obliged to submit their consciences or their conduct in what is properly called religion.

“ The peace of Christ’s kingdom is a manly and reasonable peace, built upon charity, and love, and mutual forbearance, and receiving one another as God receives us. As for any other peace, founded upon a submission of our honesty, as well as our under-

standings, it is falsely so called. It is not the peace of the kingdom of Christ, but the lethargy of it.”—*The Nature of the Kingdom, or Church, of Christ.*

The same views are advocated by the present Archbishop of Dublin.

*Note M, p. 145.*

Much has been said and written in late years on the Mosaic law, and on the question whether it be binding on Christians. That Christians are not to obey the law in the hope of obtaining salvation by it is certain; and that its moral precepts are to be obeyed in the spirit of devoted love is equally certain; so that the only question is,—From what authority do those precepts derive their obligatory character? From the Old Testament or from the New? Many answer, unhesitatingly,—From the Old; but without sufficient reason, and very often to the prejudice of Christian obedience. The answer that seems most consistent with scripture is,—From the New. It is certain that the Apostle Paul often speaks of the termination of the Mosaic law, and of the exemption of Christians from its obligations, without ever limiting or qualifying his assertions.

This answer is of considerable importance in the question of antinomianism. The practical antinomian—the man who violates the moral precepts of the Bible—it is impossible to defend; the man who keeps these precepts, *not because they are found in the law*, but because they are enjoined in the gospel, has certainly scripture on his side, while he thus gets rid of the difficulties involved in the unscriptural distinction between precepts moral, and precepts ceremonial, or civil. He, too, equally with other Christians, is a moral man; only his morality is founded, not on the claims of the Mosaic law, but on the “constraining love” of the “better covenant.” Christian union and Christian morality have both suffered from an over-statement of the authority of the previous dispensation. It is more consistent with New-Testament language to practise divine precepts because spoken by “the Son,” than to practise them because spoken “by angels.” The man who sets aside the law to



obey the gospel, such an antinomian no one can condemn; his is the antinomianism of the New Testament.

*Note N, p. 145.*

The Levites correspond, in part, to what Mr. Coleridge calls a "national clerisy." They were the learned class of the nation; they studied natural philosophy, medicine, mathematics, history, civil polity, and jurisprudence; they were the physicians, the inspectors of weights and measures, surveyors of land, astronomical calculators, receivers of the customs, judges and counsellors of the king. Civil regulations, the performance of sacred services, the religious instruction of the people, all were entrusted, though not exclusively, into their hands. Their different duties are more or less specifically enumerated in the following passages:—1 Chron. xxiii. 4; xxvi. 29; Deut. x. 10; xxviii. 11; Lev. xxv. 8—12; Deut. xvii. 9; xx. 2; Lev. xiii. xiv.; Mal. ii. 4—7.

It was not, therefore, as priests only that they were endowed.

See JAHN, *History of the Hebrew Commonwealth*, book ii. § 12.

*Note O, p. 162.*

The following remarks on the theory of Mr. Gladstone, taken from a paper of the *Edinburgh Review* for April, 1839, are so appropriate and beautiful, that no apology can be necessary for the insertion of them:—

"Mr. Gladstone's whole theory rests on this great fundamental proposition,—that the propagation of religious truth is one of the principal ends of government, as government. If Mr. Gladstone has not proved this proposition, his system vanishes at once.

"As to some of the ends of civil government all people are agreed. That it is designed to protect our persons and our property,—that it is designed to compel us to satisfy our wants, not by rapine, but by industry,—that it is designed to compel us to decide our differences, not by the strong hand, but by arbitration,—that it

is designed to direct our whole force, as that of one man, against any other society which may offer us injury,—these are propositions which will hardly be disputed.

“ Now, these are matters in which man, without any reference to any higher being, or to any future state, is very deeply interested. Every man, be he idolator, Mahometan, Jew, papist, Socinian, deist, or atheist, naturally loves life, shrinks from pain, desires those comforts which can be enjoyed only in communities where property is secure. To be murdered, to be tortured, to be robbed, to be sold into slavery, to be exposed to the outrages of gangs of foreign banditti calling themselves patriots,—these are evidently evils from which men of every religion, and men of no religion, wish to be protected; and therefore it will hardly be disputed that men of every religion, and of no religion, have thus far a common interest in being well governed.

“ But the hopes and fears of man are not limited to this short life and to this visible world. He finds himself surrounded by the signs of a power and wisdom higher than his own; and, in all ages and nations, men of all orders of intellects, from Bacon and Newton down to the rudest tribes of cannibals, have believed in the existence of some superior mind. Thus far the voice of mankind is almost unanimous. But whether there be one God or many,—what may be his natural and what his moral attributes,—in what relation his creatures stand to him,—whether he have ever disclosed himself to us by any other revelation than that which is written in all the parts of the glorious and well-ordered world which he has made,—whether his revelation be contained in any permanent record,—how that record should be interpreted, and whether it have pleased him to appoint any unerring interpreter on earth,—these are questions respecting which there exists the widest diversity of opinion, and respecting which the great majority of our race has, ever since the dawn of regular history, been deplorably in error.

“ Now, here are two great objects:—One is the protection of the persons and estates of citizens from injury; the other is the propagation of religious truth. No two objects more entirely distinct can

well be imagined. The former belongs wholly to the visible and tangible world in which we live; the latter belongs to that higher world which is beyond the reach of our senses. The former belongs to this life; the latter to that which is to come. Men who are perfectly agreed as to the importance of the former object, and as to the way of attaining it, differ as widely as possible respecting the latter object. We must therefore pause before we admit that the persons, be they who they may, who are entrusted with power for the promotion of the former object, ought always to use that power for the promotion of the latter object.

“ Mr. Gladstone conceives that the duties of governments are paternal,—a doctrine which we shall not believe till he can shew us some government which loves its subjects as a father loves a child, and which is as superior in intelligence to its subjects as a father is superior to a child. He tells us, in lofty, though somewhat indistinct language, that ‘government occupies in moral the place of *το παν* in physical science.’ If government be indeed *το παν* in moral science, we do not understand why rulers should not assume all the functions which Plato assigned to them. Why should they not take away the child from the mother, select the nurse, regulate the school, overlook the playground, fix the hours of labour and of recreation, prescribe what ballads shall be sung, what tunes shall be played, what books shall be read, what physic shall be swallowed? Why should not they choose our wives, limit our expenses, and stint us to a certain number of dishes, of glasses of wine, and of cups of tea? Plato, whose hardihood in speculation was, perhaps, more wonderful than any other peculiarity of his extraordinary mind, and who shrank from nothing to which his principles led, went this whole length. Mr. Gladstone is not so intrepid; he contents himself with laying down this proposition—that, whatever be the body which, in any community, is employed to protect the persons and property of men, that body ought also, in its corporate capacity, to profess a religion, to employ its power for the propagation of that religion, and to require conformity to that religion, as an indispensable qualification for all civil office. He distinctly

declares that he does not in this proposition confine his view to orthodox governments, or even to Christian governments. The circumstance that a religion is false does not, he tells us, diminish the obligation of governors, as such, to uphold it. If they neglect to do so, 'we cannot,' he says, 'but regard the fact as aggravating the case of the holders of such creed.' 'I do not scruple to affirm,' he adds, 'that if a Mahometan conscientiously believes his religion to come from God, and to teach divine truth, he must believe that truth to be beneficial, and beneficial beyond all other things to the soul of man; and he must, therefore, and ought to desire its extension, and to use for its extension all proper and legitimate means; and that if such Mahometan be a prince, he ought to count among those means the application of whatever influence or funds he may lawfully have at his disposal for such purposes.'

"Surely this is a hard saying. Before we admit that the Emperor Julian, in employing the influence and the funds at his disposal for the extinction of Christianity, was doing no more than his duty,—before we admit that the Arian Theodoric would have committed a crime if he had suffered a single believer in the divinity of Christ to hold any civil employment in Italy,—before we admit that the Dutch government is bound to exclude from office all members of the church of England, the King of Bavaria to exclude from office all protestants, the great Turk to exclude from office all Christians, the King of Ava to exclude from office all who hold the unity of God, we think ourselves entitled to demand very full and accurate demonstration. When the consequences of a doctrine are so startling, we may well require that its foundations shall be very solid.

"The following paragraph is a specimen of the arguments by which Mr. Gladstone has, as he conceives, established his great fundamental proposition:—

" 'We may state the same proposition in a more general form, in which it surely must command universal assent. Wherever there is power in the universe, that power is the property of God, the King of that universe—his property of right, however for a time withholden or abused. Now this property is, as it were, realized, is

used according to the will of the owner, when it is used for the purposes he has ordained, and in the temper of mercy, justice, truth, and faith, which he has taught us. But those principles never can be truly, never can be permanently entertained in the human breast, except by a continual reference to their source and the supply of the divine grace. The powers, therefore, that dwell in individuals acting as a government, as well as those that dwell in individuals acting for themselves, can only be secured for right uses by applying to them a religion.'

"Here are propositions of vast and indefinite extent, conveyed in language which has a certain obscure dignity and sanctity, attractive, we doubt not, to many minds. But the moment that we examine these propositions closely, the moment that we bring them to the test by running over but a very few of the particulars which are included in them, we find them to be false and extravagant. This doctrine, which 'must surely command universal assent,' is, that every association of human beings which exercises any power whatever—that is to say, every association of human beings—is bound, as such association, to profess a religion. Imagine the effect which would follow if this principle were really in force during four-and-twenty hours. Take one instance out of a million:—A stage-coach company has power over its horses. This power is the property of God. It is used according to the will of God when it is used with mercy; but the principle of mercy can never be truly or permanently entertained in the human breast without continual reference to God. The powers, therefore, that dwell in individuals acting as a stage-coach company can only be secured for right uses by applying to them a religion. Every stage-coach company ought, therefore, in its collective capacity, to profess some one faith,—to have its articles, and its public worship, and its tests. That this conclusion, and an infinite number of other conclusions equally strange, follow of necessity from Mr. Gladstone's principle, is as certain as it is that two and two make four; and if the legitimate conclusions be so absurd, there must be something unsound in the principle.

"We will quote another passage of the same sort:—

“ ‘ Why, then, we now come to ask, should the governing body in a state profess a religion ? First, because it is composed of individual *men* ; and they, being appointed to act in a definite moral capacity, must sanctify their acts done in that capacity by the offices of religion, inasmuch as the acts cannot otherwise be acceptable to God, or anything but sinful and punishable in themselves. And whenever we turn our face away from God in our conduct we are living atheistically. . . . In fulfilment, then, of his obligations as an individual, the statesman must be a worshipping man. But his acts are public—the powers and instruments with which he works are public—acting under and by the authority of the law, he moves at his word ten thousand subject arms ; and because such energies are thus essentially public, and wholly out of the range of mere individual agency, they must be sanctified not only by the private personal prayers and piety of those who fill public situations, but also by public acts of the men composing the public body. They must offer prayer and praise in their public and collective character—in that character wherein they constitute the organ of the nation, and wield its collected force. Wherever there is a reasoning agency, there is a moral duty and responsibility involved in it. The governors are reasoning agents for the nation in their conjoint acts as such ; and therefore there must be attached to this agency, as that without which none of our responsibilities can be met, a religion ; and this religion must be that of the conscience of the governor, or none.’ ”

“ Here, again, we find propositions of vast sweep, and of sound so orthodox and solemn, that many good people, we doubt not, have been greatly edified by it ; but let us examine the words closely, and it will immediately become plain, that if these principles be once admitted, there is an end of all society. No combination can be formed for any purpose of mutual help—for trade, for public works, for the relief of the sick or the poor, for the promotion of art or science—unless the members of the combination agree in their theological opinions. Take any such combination at random,—the London and Birmingham Railway Company, for example,—and



observe to what consequences Mr. Gladstone's arguments inevitably lead. 'Why should the directors of the railway company, in their collective capacity, profess a religion? First, because the direction is composed of individual men appointed to act in a definite moral capacity—bound to look carefully to the property, the limbs, and the lives of their fellow-creatures—bound to act diligently for their constituents—bound to govern their servants with humanity and justice—bound to fulfil with fidelity many important contracts. They must, therefore, sanctify their acts by the offices of religion, or these acts will be sinful and punishable in themselves. In fulfilment, then, of his obligations as an individual, the director of the London and Birmingham Railway Company must be a worshipping man. But his acts are public—he acts for a body—he moves at his word ten thousand subject arms; and because these energies are out of the range of his mere individual agency, they must be sanctified by public acts of devotion. The railway directors must offer prayer and praise in their public and collective character—in that character wherewith they constitute the organ of the company, and wield its collected power. Wherever there is reasoning agency, there is moral responsibility. The directors are reasoning agents for the company; and therefore there must be attached to this agency, as that without which none of our responsibilities can be met, a religion; and this religion must be that of the conscience of the director himself, or none. There must be public worship and a test. No Jew, no Socinian, no presbyterian, no catholic, no quaker, must be permitted to be the organ of the company, and to wield its collected force.' Would Mr. Gladstone really defend this proposition? We are sure that he would not; but we are sure that to this proposition, and to innumerable similar propositions, his reasoning inevitably leads.

"Again,—

" 'National will and agency are indisputably one, binding either a dissentient minority or the subject body in a manner that nothing but the recognition of the doctrine of national personality can justify. National honour and good faith are words in every one's

mouth. How do they less imply a personality in nations than the duty towards God for which we now contend? They are strictly and essentially distinct from the honour and good faith of the individuals composing the nation. France is a person to us, and we to her. A wilful injury done to her is a moral act, and a moral act quite distinct from the acts of all the individuals composing the nation. Upon broad facts like these we may rest, without resorting to the more technical proof which the laws afford in their manner of dealing with corporations. If, then, a nation have unity of will, have pervading sympathies, have the capability of reward and suffering contingent upon its acts, shall we deny its responsibility, its need of a religion to meet that responsibility? . . . . A nation, then, having a personality, lies under the obligation, like the individuals composing its governing body, of sanctifying the acts of that personality by the offices of religion; and thus we have a new and imperative ground for the existence of a state religion.'

"A new ground, certainly, but whether very imperative may be doubted. Is it not perfectly clear that this argument applies with exactly as much force to every combination of human beings for a common purpose as to governments? Is there any such combination in the world, whether technically a corporation or not, which has not this collective personality from which Mr. Gladstone deduces such extraordinary consequences? Look at banks, insurance offices, dock companies, canal companies, gas companies, hospitals, dispensaries, associations for the relief of the poor, associations for apprehending malefactors, associations of medical pupils for procuring subjects, associations of country gentlemen for keeping fox-hounds, book societies, benefit societies, clubs of all ranks, from those which have lined Pall-Mall and St. James's Street with their palaces down to the 'Free-and-easy' which meets in the shabby parlour of a village inn. Is there a single one of these combinations to which Mr. Gladstone's argument will not apply as well as to the state? In all these combinations—in the Bank of England, for example, or in the Athenæum Club—the will and agency of the society are one, and bind the dissentient minority. The Bank and

the Athenæum have a good faith and a justice different from the good faith and justice of the individual members. The Bank is a person to those who deposit bullion with it; the Athenæum is a person to the butcher and the wine-merchant. If the Athenæum keeps money at the Bank, the two societies are as much persons to each other as England and France. Either society may increase in prosperity; either may fall into difficulties. If, then, they have this unity of will; if they are capable of doing and suffering good and evil, can we, to use Mr. Gladstone's words, 'deny their responsibility, or their need of a religion to meet that responsibility?' Joint-stock banks, therefore, and clubs, 'having a personality, lie under the necessity of sanctifying that personality by the offices of religion;' and thus we have a 'new and imperative ground' for requiring all the directors and clerks of joint-stock banks, and all the officers of clubs, to qualify by taking the sacrament.

"The truth is, that Mr. Gladstone has fallen into an error very common among men of less talents than his own. It is not unusual for a person who is eager to prove a particular proposition, to assume a *major* of huge extent, which includes that particular proposition, without ever reflecting that it includes a great deal more. The fatal facility with which Mr. Gladstone multiplies expressions stately and sonorous, but of indeterminate meaning, eminently qualifies him to practise this sleight on himself and on his readers. He lays down broad general doctrines about power, when the only power of which he is thinking is the power of governments; about conjoint action, when the only conjoint action of which he is thinking is the conjoint action of citizens in a state. He first resolves on his conclusion; he then makes a *major* of most comprehensive dimensions, and having satisfied himself that it contains his conclusion, never troubles himself about what else it may contain; and as soon as we examine it, we find that it contains an infinite number of conclusions, every one of which is a monstrous absurdity.

"It is perfectly true that it would be a very good thing if all the members of all the associations in the world were men of sound religious views. We have no doubt that a good Christian will be

under the guidance of Christian principles in his conduct as director of a canal company or steward of a charity dinner. If he were, to recur to a case which we before put, a member of a stage-coach company, he would, in that capacity, remember that 'a righteous man regardeth the life of his beast;' but it does not follow that every association of men must therefore, as such association, profess a religion. It is evident that many great and useful objects can be attained in this world only by co-operation. It is equally evident that there cannot be efficient co-operation if men proceed on the principle that they must not co-operate for one object unless they agree about other objects. Nothing seems to us more beautiful or admirable in our social system than the facility with which thousands of people, who perhaps agree only on a single point, combine their energies for the purpose of carrying that single point. We see daily instances of this. Two men, one of them obstinately prejudiced against missions, the other, president of a missionary society, sit together at the board of an hospital, and heartily concur in measures for the health and comfort of the patients. Two men, one of whom is a zealous supporter and the other a zealous opponent of the system pursued in Lancaster's schools, meet at the Mendicity Society, and act together with the utmost cordiality. The general rule we take to be undoubtedly this, that it is lawful and expedient for men to unite in an association for the promotion of a good object, though they may differ with respect to other objects of still higher importance.

"It will hardly be denied that the security of the persons and property of men is a good object, and that the best way, indeed the only way, of promoting that object is, to combine men together in certain great corporations,—which are called states. These corporations are very variously, and, for the most part, very imperfectly organized. Many of them abound with frightful abuses. But it seems reasonable to believe that the worst that ever existed was, on the whole, preferable to complete anarchy.

"Now, reasoning from analogy, we should say that these great corporations would, like all other associations, be likely to attain

their end most perfectly if that end were kept singly in view; and that to refuse the services of those who are admirably qualified to promote that end, because they are not also qualified to promote some other end, however excellent, seems at first sight as unreasonable as it would be to provide that nobody who was not a fellow of the Antiquarian Society should be a governor of the Eye Infirmary, or that nobody who was not a member of the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews should be a trustee of the Theatrical Fund.

“ We have now, we conceive, shewn that it may be proper to form men into combinations for important purposes, which combinations shall have unity and common interests, and shall be under the direction of rulers entrusted with great power, and lying under solemn responsibility, and yet, that it may be highly improper that these combinations should, as such, profess any one system of religious belief, or perform any joint act of religious worship. How, then, is it proved that this may not be the case with some of those great combinations which we call states? We firmly believe that it is the case with some states. We firmly believe that there are communities in which it would be as absurd to mix up theology with government as it would have been in the right wing of the allied army at Blenheim to commence a controversy with the left wing, in the middle of the battle, about purgatory and the worship of images.

“ It is the duty, Mr. Gladstone tells us, of the persons, be they who they may, who hold supreme power in the state, to employ that power in order to promote whatever they may deem to be theological truth. Now, surely, before he can call on us to admit this proposition, he is bound to prove that these persons are likely to do more good than harm by so employing their power. The first question is, whether a government, proposing to itself the propagation of religious truth, as one of its principal ends, is more likely to lead the people aright than to lead them wrong? Mr. Gladstone evades this question, and perhaps it was his wisest course to do so.



“ ‘ If,’ says he, ‘ the government be good, let it have its natural duties and powers at its command ; but if not good, let it be made so. . . . We follow, therefore, the true course in looking first for the true *idea*, or abstract conception of a government, of course with allowance for the evil and frailty that are in man, and then in examining whether there be comprised in that *idea* a capacity, and consequent duty, on the part of a government to lay down any laws, or devote any means for the purposes of religion,—in short, to exercise a choice upon religion.’

“ Of course, Mr. Gladstone has a perfect right to argue any abstract question, provided he will constantly bear in mind that it is only an abstract question that he is arguing. Whether a perfect government would or would not be a good machinery for the propagation of religious truth is certainly a harmless, and may, for aught we know, be an edifying subject of inquiry. But it is very important that we should remember that there is not, and never has been, any such government in the world. There is no harm at all in inquiring what course a stone thrown into the air would take if the law of gravitation did not operate ; but the consequences would be unpleasant, if the inquirer, as soon as he had finished his calculation, were to begin to throw stones about in all directions, without considering that his conclusion rests on a false hypothesis, and that his projectiles, instead of flying away through infinite space, will speedily return in parabolas, and break the windows and heads of his neighbours.

“ It is very easy to say that governments are good, or, if not good, ought to be made so. But what is meant by good government ? And how are all the bad governments in the world to be made good ? And of what value is a theory which is true only on a supposition in the highest degree extravagant ?

“ We do not admit that, if a government were, for all its temporal ends, as perfect as human frailty allows, such government would therefore be necessarily qualified to propagate true religion ; for we see that the fitness of governments to propagate true religion is by no means proportioned to their fitness for the temporal ends



of their institution. Looking at individuals, we see that the princes under whose rule nations have been most ably protected from foreign and domestic disturbance, and have made the most rapid advances in civilization, have been by no means good teachers of divinity. Take, for example, the best French sovereign,—Henry the Fourth, a king who restored order, terminated a terrible civil war, brought the finances into an excellent condition, made his country respected throughout Europe, and endeared himself to the great body of the people whom he ruled; yet this man was twice a Huguenot, and twice a papist; he was, as Davila hints, strongly suspected of having no religion at all in theory, and was certainly not much under religious restraints in his practice. Take the Czar Peter, the Empress Catharine, Frederick the Great. It will surely not be disputed that these sovereigns, with all their faults, were, if we consider them with reference merely to the temporal ends of government, far above the average of merit. Considered as theological guides, Mr. Gladstone would probably put them below the most abject drivellers of the Spanish branch of the house of Bourbon. Again; when we pass from individuals to systems, we by no means find that the aptitude of governments for propagating religious truth is proportioned to their aptitude for secular functions. Without being blind admirers either of the French or of the American institutions, we think it clear that the persons and property of citizens are better protected in France and in New England than in almost any society that now exists, or that has ever existed,—very much better, certainly, than under the orthodox rule of Constantine or Theodosius. But neither the government of France nor that of New England is so organized as to be fit for the propagation of theological doctrines. Nor do we think it improbable that the most serious religious errors might prevail in a state, which, considered merely with reference to temporal objects, might approach far nearer than any that has ever been known to the *idéal* of what a state should be.

“ But we shall leave this abstract question, and look at the world as we find it. Does, then, the way in which governments generally

obtain their power make it at all probable that they will be more favourable to orthodoxy than to heterodoxy? A nation of barbarians pours down on a rich and unwarlike empire, enslaves the people, portions out the land, and blends the institutions which it finds in the cities with those which it has brought from the woods. A handful of daring adventurers from a civilized nation wander to some savage country, and reduce the aboriginal race to bondage. A successful general turns his arms against the state which he serves. A society, made brutal by oppression, rises madly on its masters, sweeps away all old laws and usages, and, when its first paroxysm of rage is over, sinks down passively under any form of polity which may spring out of the chaos. A chief of a party, as at Florence, becomes imperceptibly a sovereign and the founder of a dynasty. A captain of mercenaries, as at Milan, seizes on a city, and by the sword makes himself its ruler. An elective senate, as at Venice, usurps permanent and hereditary power. It is in events such as these that governments have generally originated; and we can see nothing in such events to warrant us in believing that the governments thus called into existence will be peculiarly well fitted to distinguish between religious truth and heresy.

“When, again, we look at the constitution of governments which have become settled, we find no great security for the orthodoxy of rulers. One magistrate holds power because his name was drawn out of a purse; another, because his father held it before him. There are representative systems of all sorts,—large constituent bodies, small constituent bodies, universal suffrage, high pecuniary qualifications. We see that, for the temporal ends of government, some of these constitutions are very skilfully constructed, and that the very worst of them is preferable to anarchy. But it passes our understanding to comprehend what connexion any one of them has with theological truth.

“And how stands the fact? Have not almost all the governments in the world always been in the wrong on religious subjects? Mr. Gladstone, we imagine, would say that, except in the time of Constantine, of Jovian, and of a very few of their successors, and

occasionally in England since the Reformation, no government has ever been sincerely friendly to the pure and apostolical church of Christ. If, therefore, it be true that every ruler is bound in conscience to use his power for the propagation of his own religion, it will follow that, for one ruler who has been bound in conscience to use his power for the propagation of truth, a thousand have been bound in conscience to use their power for the propagation of falsehood. Surely this is a conclusion from which common sense recoils. Surely, if experience shews that a certain machine, when used to produce a certain effect, does not produce that effect once in a thousand times, but produces, in the vast majority of cases, an effect directly contrary, we cannot be wrong in saying that it is not a machine of which the principal end is to be so used."

*Note P, p. 163.*

On the opinion of the Fathers concerning the office of the civil magistrate the testimony of Dr. Campbell will generally be deemed sufficient. The same fact is shewn by Barclay in his *Apology*, and by Milton in his *Tracts on the Church*.

*Note Q, p. 205.*

Among the most authentic documents relative to the comparative efficiency of the voluntary and compulsory systems, is the report of the commissioners appointed to examine into the state of religious instruction in Scotland. From their report of the city of Edinburgh we select the following facts, as they afford a fair sample of the working of the two systems in most large towns.

There are, in connexion with the establishment, 28 churches, with 36,001 sittings in all; of which

20,995 are let;

1,230 free;

3,982 otherwise allocated; and

9,794 neither let nor allocated.

In connexion with other dissenting denominations there are 55 chapels, with 42,705 sittings; of which

23,193 are let;

7,247 free;

205 otherwise allocated; and

11,360 neither let nor allocated.

In a population of 162,292, the number of individuals who, it is calculated, are able to attend public worship, reckoning 44.44 per cent. as a fair average attendance, is 72,132.

Whence it appears—

1. That in the established church alone there is not room for one-half of what ought to be the church-going population.

2. That, taking into account the different dissenting places, there is an ample sufficiency.

3. That it is not true, as Mr. Gladstone asserts, that dissenters have never attended to the wants of the poor in their plans of Christian instruction; on the contrary, they do more for them than the establishment.

4. That dissenters have provided as much church accommodation by the voluntary contributions of half the people as churchmen have provided by the compulsory support of them all.

Similar statistical accounts have been published of the state of church accommodation in London, and supporting the same results. The objection, that voluntaryism is thus efficient only in large towns is refuted by the example of Wesleyanism, which has planted its chapels in almost every parish of the kingdom. All that is wanted is, more co-operation and love.

*Note R, p. 193.*

The division of the country into parishes is supposed by Dr. Chalmers to be an advantage peculiar to establishments—a supposition by no means consistent with facts. Countries were so divided in early times, before the church was established; and they are so divided now by sects which are not established. The

methodists have divided and subdivided the whole of England ; and each division has its chapel and its minister. Popery has its 513 chapels, its 610 priests, its 17 vicars apostolic, (of whom nine are bishops,) its 10 colleges, its 17 convents, its 60 seminaries of education ; whilst in Ireland there are no less than 2500 priests, 8 colleges, 23 bishops, with 4 archbishops. In the colonies it is said to have made the most alarming progress, and all by the efficiency of the voluntary principle. " Error, though no match for truth alone, is again likely to prove more than a match for truth and power combined."

This same system of subdivision has been adopted by dissenters in large towns with very good success. Localities are divided into districts of from 500 to 1000 families each, which are generally under weekly visitation. It will be one of the best signs of the times when the whole of the towns of this country are so divided. It is surely time Christians kept their differences in abeyance now that so many enemies are combined against them.

*Note S, p. 206.*

The following tables have been extracted from the works of Drs. Reed and Matheson, of Drs. Cox and Hoby, on the American churches ; they serve to illustrate very satisfactorily all questions connected with the statistics of religion in that country :—

No. I.—Population of the American States, with the Numbers of Congregationalists and Baptists in each State.

	STATES.	Population in 1810.	Population in 1820.	Population in 1830.	CONGREGATIONALISTS.			BAPTISTS In Association.		
					Ministers	Churches	Communic.	Ministers	Churches	Communic.
1	Maine .....	228,705	298,335	399,462	114	172	13,019	157	242	16,380
2	New Hampshire.....	214,460	244,161	269,533	117	152	18,347	66	92	7,610
3	Vermont .....	217,895	235,764	280,679	177	206	22,291	82	127	10,796
4	Massachusetts .....	472,040	523,287	610,014	257	283	46,064	159	174	10,999
5	Rhode Island .....	76,931	83,039	97,212	10	10	1,300	23	31	4,874
6	Connecticut.....	261,942	275,248	297,711	230	226	29,579	81	95	10,964
7	New York .....	959,049	1,372,812	1,913,508	30	30	...	526	683	68,295
8	New Jersey .....	245,562	277,575	320,779	...	...	...	22	39	4,000
9	Pennsylvania .....	810,091	1,049,313	1,347,672	...	...	...	114	182	14,011
10	Ohio.....	230,760	581,434	937,679	...	...	...	175	330	14,000
11	Indiana .....	24,520	147,178	341,582	...	...	...	243	327	12,146
12	Illinois .....	12,282	55,211	157,575	...	...	...	135	200	6,107
13	Delaware.....	72,674	72,749	76,739	...	...	...	5	9	636
14	Maryland.....	380,546	407,350	446,913	...	...	...	19	35	1,251
15	Virginia .....	974,622	1,065,366	1,211,272	...	...	...	225	441	55,602
16	North Carolina .....	555,500	638,829	738,470	...	...	...	128	372	21,676
17	South Carolina .....	415,115	502,741	581,458	...	...	...	134	286	32,040
18	Georgia .....	252,433	340,989	516,567	...	...	...	234	587	39,729
19	Alabama .....	29,000	144,000	308,000	...	...	...	113	298	14,287
20	Mississippi .....	45,000	75,000	136,000	...	...	...	35	101	2,861
21	Louisiana.....	76,000	153,000	215,000	...	...	...	12	16	728
22	Tennessee .....	261,000	422,000	684,000	...	...	...	186	475	26,435
23	Kentucky .....	406,000	564,000	688,000	...	...	...	179	491	34,791
24	Missouri .....	19,000	66,000	140,000	...	...	...	77	178	16,919
		7,241,127	9,593,421	12,685,825	935	1,079	130,600	3,224	5,611	425,207



No. II.—*Summary View of all Denominations.*

	Ministers.	Churches.	Members.
Baptists (in association) ...	3224	5611	425,207
Ditto (unassociated) .....	1440	2465	217,002
Congregationalists .....	935	1079	130,600
Episcopalians .....	697	800	60,000
Lutherans .....	216	627	59,787
Methodists .....	250	150	30,000
Episcopal Church .....	2453	—	638,784
Presbyterians .....	2290	2817	275,850
Quakers .....	—	500	220,000
Reformed .....	511	897	66,515
Roman-catholics .....	422	547	600,000
Unitarians .....	165	187	160,000
United Brethren .....	33	24	5,745
New Jerusalemites .....	33	27	—
Shakers .....	45	15	—
Jews .....	—	—	15,000
	12,719	13,746	2,904,490

There are besides, in America, about 100 colleges, with upwards of 8000 students, and 40 theological seminaries, for the supply of destitute churches and districts, with about 1500.

From these facts the following conclusions are obvious :—

1. America is in circumstances rather unfavourable than otherwise for the exhibition of the efficiency of voluntaryism. With a population which has increased nearly 100 per cent. in twenty years, and part of whom are widely scattered over a large extent of country, whilst the rest are absorbed in the avocations of trade, without time for the cultivation of literature, it must be matter of surprise and gratitude that she has done so much, not of contempt that she has done so little.

2. Even in circumstances thus difficult voluntaryism has done to the full as much numerically as compulsion has done in this country. There is, on the average, one minister for every thousand of the population. The deficiencies of certain districts are owing, not to the system, but to want of regulation, or to circumstances which it is probably impossible to control.

*Note T, p. 206.*

The number of protestant dissenting chapels in England and Wales is about 7500; and the number of chapels of all denominations, including catholics, quakers, unitarians, and Jews, about 8700: and estimating the attendants at only 350 each on the average, the number of dissenters must be at least 3,000,000; whilst this number, according to the ratio of attendance to which we have referred in Note Q, represents a population of at least 6,500,000. Adding this number to the 6,500,000 of catholics in Ireland, the majority of the population are clearly dissenters.

The completest accounts of any denomination that have yet been published are to be found in the report of the Baptist Union for 1838. It seems that there are in England and Wales 1426 churches of that denomination; in 784 of which there are 75,048 members, and in 451 of them 58,449 Sabbath-school children; and in connexion with 372, 966 village stations. No documents had been received from the rest of the churches.

The following is the income of a few of the religious societies of this country for the last year:—

	Receipts.				Expenditure.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.	
Baptist Home Missionary Society .....	2693	14	3	...	2622	3	4	
Baptist Missionary Society, 47th anniv.	22,416	0	0	...	20,622	18	11	
Baptist Irish Society .....	—			...	3213	0	4	
General Baptist Missionary Society ...	1307	2	1	...	1601	18	3	
Baptist Home Mission (Scotland) .....	1100	0	0	...	1100	0	0	
British and Foreign Bible Society, 35th anniversary .....	105,225	2	11	...	106,509	6	4	
British and Foreign Mission .....	110	7	4½	...	172	5	11	
British Reformation Society .....	1193	0	4	...	1163	6	7	
British and Foreign Sailors' Society, 6th anniversary.....	2596	14	6	...	—			
British and Foreign School Society, 34th anniversary .....	5234	3	1	...	5205	19	3	
British & Foreign Temperance Society, 8th anniversary.....	931	8	5½	...	772	6	10	

	Receipts.				Expenditure.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.	
Children's Friend Society, 9th anniver.	5785	13	6	...	5214	13	4	
Christian Knowledge Society.....	90,363	0	0	...	—			
Christian Instruction Society, 14th ann.	1358	10	10	...	1444	0	6	
Church of Scotland Missions .....	6000	0	0	...	—			
Church Missionary Society, 39th ann.	72,031	6	1	...	91,453	9	1	
Church Pastoral-Aid Society, 4th ann.	10,423	4	5	...	9727	5	10	
Colonial Missionary Society, 3rd ann.	2356	6	6½	...	3170	11	0½	
Colonial Church Society .....	1483	4	4	...	1382	5	3	
English Monthly Tract Society .....	148	10	7	...	212	2	7	
Episcopal Floating Church Society ...	240	4	3	...	269	3	3	
European Missionary Society, 21st ann.	1390	10	0	...	1753	13	11	
Gospel Propagation Society .....	71,308	18	2	...	74,302	13	6	
Hibernian Society, 33rd anniversary ...	11,702	8	8	...	11,697	3	9	
Home and Colonial Infant School Society, 3rd anniversary .....	1850	0	0	...	1730	0	0	
Home Missionary Society, 20th ann....	7000	0	0	...	6605	0	0	
Irish Evangelical Society, 25th ann....	2968	10	0	...	2938	9	4	
Irish Society of London, 17th ann. ...	5020	0	0	...	—			
London Society for the Propagation of Christianity among the Jews, 31st an.	16,720	13	8	...	17,264	18	5	
London City Mission, 4th anniversary	4320	8	5	...	4323	15	1	
London Missionary Society, 45th ann.	65,490	10	5	...	75,855	17	11	
Lord's-Day Observance Society, 8th anniversary .....	522	16	8	...	471	19	9	
Moravian Missionary Society .....	4335	13	1	...	—			
Naval and Military Bible Society, 59th anniversary .....	2804	0	3	...	2827	15	6	
New British and Foreign Temperance Society, 3rd anniversary .....	715	2	6	...	804	17	11	
Newfoundland School Society, 16th anniversary .....	3103	0	0	...	3475	0	0	
Prayer-Book and Homily Society, 27th anniversary .....	2532	11	6	...	2515	6	1	
Peace Society, 23rd anniversary.....	549	10	6	...	660	5	9	
Sailors' Asylum .....	1024	7	2	...	1034	2	4	
Sailors' Home .....	3963	8	9	...	4225	8	10	
Secession Missions .....	—			...	5100	0	0	

	Receipts.				Expenditure.		
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Sunday-School Union, 36th ann. ....	9469	16	11	...	9700	18	3
Trinitarian Bible Society, 8th ann. ...	3059	0	7	...	3096	17	3
Wesleyan Missionary Society .....	84,818	12	2	...	100,077	1	7

Adding to this list what is collected in different churches for local missions, we shall have a sum of at least one million raised for the purposes of *ab extra* voluntaryism in this form.

Reckoning the number of dissenting ministers of all persuasions at 8000, and supposing that they receive on an average 120*l.* a year each, we have nearly one million more, without taking into account the sums raised and expended on chapels and benevolent institutions.

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